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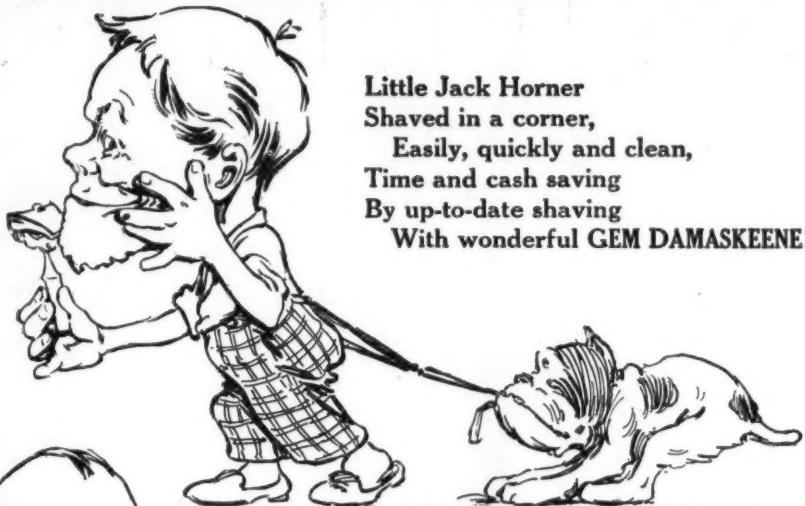
DEC., 1914

MAGAZINE

15 CENTS



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No. 3



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YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION \$1.50

SINGLE COPIES 15 CENTS

Monthly Publication Issued by SMITH PUBLISHING HOUSE, 29-39 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

ORMOND G. SMITH, President, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City; **GEORGE C. SMITH**, Secretary and Treasurer.

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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

VOLUME 20

DECEMBER, 1914

NUMBER 3

Fleshpots of Egypt

By Virginia Middleton

Author of "Sally Hazard, Social Secretary," "The Harriet Mead Case," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAYO BUNKER

CHAPTER I.

LUCY, tossing restlessly on her couch behind the screen that converted a corner of her studio into a bedroom, counted the chimes of a church clock striking in the distance.

"Only six!" she groaned. "Heavens, how slowly the time passes! I might as well get up now, though what I shall do with myself for the next five hours I'm sure I don't know. This getting married is a fearfully upsetting thing."

She slid to her feet, and stood for a minute erect beside the bed, a strong, slim, young figure. There was a little frown, unbefitting a bridal, upon her low, white forehead, between the eyebrows that were just a little broad for beauty—they looked as if they had been laid on with a brush instead of with the traditional pencil—but which were so smooth, so delicately brown that the slight defect was forgiven. Beneath them, her violet-gray eyes were shadowed with sleeplessness.

She slipped her pretty bare feet into embroidered Chinese slippers, and covered her nightdress with a scarlet silk kimono. Then, from the rack at the head of the bed, she took her bag of toilet belongings, passed from behind

the screen into the main part of the studio, crossed it to the hall door, opened it, and looked cautiously out. Of course, the coast to the bathroom, which she shared with the two girls on the opposite side of the corridor, was clear at this unearthly hour. She pattered across the floor, and in another minute the sound of flowing water was threatening the slumbers of her two friends, asleep on either side the bathroom.

Back in her own quarters again, aglow from her tubbing, the lassitude of the sleepless night forgotten in the invigoration of water and friction, she disappeared behind the second screen, which gave her a tiny kitchen. She set the water to boiling while she got into her clothes. She touched them tenderly, the fine, foamy things that she was to wear as a bride.

"You are darlings," she told the delicately embroidered little rosebuds, the tiny tucks, the infinitesimal stitches, the white ribbons. "And I'm glad I got you, even if I had to go horribly in debt for you!" The sight of herself, with her silken petticoats and her lacy frills half disclosed beneath the old red kimono, pleased her so much that the last lingering trace of the frown fled

from her brow. She whistled as she made herself a cup of coffee, and she drank it happily.

Then she set about putting the apartment in order. With its medley of artistic belongings, it was not an unattractive room, though it suffered from its necessity of being too many kinds of one. Lucy's easel, before the big north window, and the tilted drawing board held examples of her work—pencil-and-ink drawings thumb-nailed to the boards. One was unmistakably a fashion illustration, and Lucy made a grimace at it as she unfastened it. Before the other—a Fifth Avenue scene on a crowded spring afternoon—she stood attentive for a moment or two.

"I can draw, if I do say it who shouldn't." She nodded her head complacently as she unpinned that one also. "Those people are very much alive. Oh, if only I could get on!" Again the frown appeared between her eyebrows.

She opened the windows to the spring air and sunshine.

"Happy the bride the sun shines on," she quoted. "Oh, I wonder, I wonder if she is! I have moments of suspecting that she's a great fool, that bride! To think that I, who always meant never to fall in love with an artist or a poor man, should have been bowled over by a painter as impecunious as I am myself! It's too absurd. Dear old Hal!"

The frown was dissipated in a misty-eyed smile. There came a ring at the doorbell. Lucy shuffled over to the door, opened it a crack, and beheld the amiably a-grin face of the day elevator boy, just come on duty.

"Box for you, Miss Wendover," he announced.

"Thank you, Cæsar!" She extended her arm, and took in the package. It was a small, square box, rather damp and rather collapsed. It bore a special-delivery stamp in one corner.

"An' here," pursued the playful Cæsar, "is a letter that just came—special!"

Having thus doled out his gifts, like a grown person prolonging the blissful expectation and excitement of a child, he withdrew, and Lucy, seeing the handwriting upon the envelope, laid it against her fair cheek. The frown was banished for good now, and the firm lips were tenderly smiling.

"Dear old Halloran!" she murmured as she opened her lover's letter.

The last letter I shall ever write to Lucy Wendover! And, like so many of the letters that have preceded it, it contains nothing of any importance, except that I love her, love her! It isn't really a letter, my darling. It's a good-morning kiss to brush your cheek when you awake on your wedding day. Oh, Lucy, my sweet—I'm not good enough for you, I know it. You, with your beauty and your great gift and your wonderful, shining personality—there never was any one on earth good enough for you! But you should at least have had an ambassador, so that you might teach queens how to walk and talk and hold their royal heads. Or a— Oh, I don't know what. No one is good enough for you. Least of all a poor devil of a painter whose canvases are less valuable when he has spread them with paint than they were before.

You see, I'm writing from the country. I have been up to say good-by to poor old Aunt Sallie and to tell her that you and I are coming to see her the first Sunday after we get back from our wedding trip. I didn't tell the dear old soul that that was likely to be about as far as Newark or Long Island City! She cried because she couldn't make us a present.

I went walking in the woods back of her tiny, tumble-down, little place, and I found the arbutus. I send you that, too, for "good morning," sweetheart. And I shall see you at noon to-morrow, and you will be mine forever after. God make me worthy of you.

H. L.

She kissed the note, and laid it again to her cheek, to her bosom, through the laces and embroideries. Then she opened the box—the damp, limp box with the arbutus, already browning a little at the edges, still bedded with the last fall's leaves and the moss in which

it had grown, but fragrant as the dawn. She kissed it, too; then she made a little *mone*—some earth had come off upon her lips. But she continued to smile tenderly as she arranged it in a finger bowl.

And now the day was really awake. Fanny and Cornelia Dent, from the studio across the hall, came running in with more flowers, with kisses, with excitement, with statements that breakfast was ready in their room, and that Lucy was going to make a perfectly beautiful bride, and with inquiries addressed to the circumambient air as to whether it was not a perfect outrage that she was to be married in a blue cheviot when white satin would have so become her. And with further inquiries addressed to her as to whether she wouldn't relent and let all "the crowd" accompany her to the church where the ceremony was to be performed, instead of only the two witnesses. And with still further inquiries as to whether she wouldn't tell them where she and Hal were going for their wedding trip. But Lucy was adamant.

"This is the marriage of two poverty-stricken artists," she informed them. "It's probably the cheapest wedding ever celebrated in the city of New York. And since that's what it really is, that's what it's going to stay—no crowds of admiring friends, no nothing! But when Hal sells a picture to the Metropolitan and I paint Mrs. High-muck-a-muck's portrait—maybe we won't have a wedding anniversary! Watch us! That's all I have to say."

"Well, he's a perfect love, even if he is poor," commented Fanny Dent. "And so are you. And you'll be ten thousand times happier than if you were merely rich and ordinary!"

"Come on over to breakfast!" commanded Cornelia. "There's a dream of an omelet with such curls of bacon as you never saw—fairly crimped, those curls! Come on before it's cold."

"Money," pursued Fanny wisely, "counts for very little as far as real happiness is concerned."

"I don't want to seem mercenary, Fanny," retorted the bride elect, "but I'd like to have a chance to test its happiness-producing qualities. Lord, but I've hated the leanness of my life, sometimes—"

"The omelet—" interjected Cornelia, and the girls sped across the hall.

More letters for Lucy. Many people seemed to know that this was the great day in her life, despite the inconspicuousness of her wedding arrangements. A few presents came, all sorts of little things. The telephone rang—fellow artists and fellow art students of the old days wanted to wish her happiness. The color deepened on her delicate, sea-shell cheeks. By and by Halloran himself called her up, having reached town. Her eyes, as she heard his voice along the wire, grew radiant.

"At a quarter of twelve," she said obediently after him. "Oh, Hal! You oughtn't to take a taxi—you know we can't afford it. All right, then—and, of course, I'm really glad in my heart, though I know we ought to walk. Yes, my bags are packed. Fanny and Cornelia are going to gather my belongings together and send them around to your studio by the time we come back. All right. Oh, Hal—I can't! I can't say it! Central may be listening. Very well, then—I do, I do, with all my heart!"

The mid-morning mail arrived. It consisted chiefly of circulars, postal cards, and the like. But there was one letter for Lucy. It was from the *Hearth and Heart Magazine*.

"What is it, Lucy?" asked Cornelia. "Do they want you to do some work for them?"

"Oh, I guess not!" said Lucy as she tore the envelope open. "I sent them some allegedly humorous drawings last week—they're probably announcing that

they're returning them to me under separate cover. That's what all the other magazines to which I have submitted them have said in their polite little notes—Why, girls!"

"Lucy! Lucy!" cried the girls in a jubilating response. For from the folds of the letter there had fallen a long, thin, pale-blue slip of paper—a check. Fanny Dent leaped upon it, picked it up, and read it.

"A hundred and fifty dollars, Lute! A hundred and fifty dollars! What perfect darlings! And on your wedding morning! It's a wedding present. What do the angels say?"

A trifle breathlessly, Lucy mumbled:

"DEAR MADAM: We have been very favorably impressed with your drawings, 'The Bosky Babes.' We are inclosing you a check for the three which you sent us. You did not name a price, but we hope that this will be satisfactory to you. Would you care to consider the possibility of doing us a series of 'Bosky Babes'?

"As you are perhaps aware, *Hearth and Heart* has recently passed into a new management, and it is our intention to spare no effort or expense to make a better and more universally appealing woman's magazine of it than any now on the market. If you will name a time when it would be convenient for you to call upon us, we shall be very glad to reserve that hour for the appointment. Your 'Bosky Babes' convince us that you can do exactly the kind of work for which we are looking in our art department—humorous, but with a heart interest, and a quaint, unusual touch. Hoping to have the pleasure of seeing you soon, very cordially yours,

"JOHN ENWRIGHT, Managing Editor."

"Lucy! How perfectly splendid! Why didn't you ever let us see the 'Bosky Babes'—what a name!"

"Because I was ashamed to," replied Lucy, with great frankness. "They were vulgar little beasts and a steal at that—in a way, I mean. However"—she glanced again at Mr. John Enwright's agreeable letter—"however, if that is what *Hearth and Heart* thinks good, far be it from me to undecieve them—anyway until after I get my wedding finery paid for!"

"A husband and a perfectly good order on the same day—it's likely to make an anarchist of me!" said Cornelia, kissing the favorite child of fortune. "And speaking of husbands, it's high time you were getting ready. Where's your blouse?"

"Second drawer," replied Lucy absently as she smoothed the check between her fingers.

"Lucy! What a beauty!"

"It ought to be," declared its owner as she extended her arms and slid them into the sleeves of a confection of blue chiffon, silver gauze, creamy lace, and a few other odds and ends. "Mathilde charged me thirty-five for it."

"You oughtn't to go to Mathilde, you extravagant puss!" scolded Cornelia, while Fanny reverently produced from the hanger in the wardrobe Lucy's blue serge suit.

"I get so tired of going to cheap people and of getting cheap things," replied Lucy. "You don't know how I hate it—sometimes. Sometimes I don't care, of course. Fanny, angel, my hat is in the box under the couch. Isn't it a dream?"

The bride's maids agreed that it was, indeed, a dream—and a Parisian dream, if their instinct had not failed them. Lucy complacently informed them that they were right. She cocked her head at her reflection in the mirror with a sparrowlike grace. Then her eyes sought the watch upon her wrist.

"In five minutes he'll be here," she told her friends with a sudden change of manner. Her lips grew a little pale.

"Oh!" she cried. "I wonder how I dare—I wonder how any one dares. It's such a great step—I'm afraid. I mean afraid of myself and all the weakness and badness in me. Oh, yes, Corny, dear, there is weakness in me, and badness, too—there's selfishness and love of luxury and impatience and obstinacy. And I haven't a high-



They watched the look of pride that Halloran Lord bent upon his bride, the air of protection with which he escorted her.

minded principle to bless myself with!
Oh, I'm a poor stick—I know myself!"

"You're the most generous thing

alive, Lucy Wendover!" cried Fanny hotly.

"I know what you mean," answered

Lucy, smiling upon her champion against herself. "That sort of generosity is easy when one has anything. But there's a harder kind than merely giving away money when one happens to have a cent or two. And I—I'm scared. I've lived by myself and made my own way, such as it is, since I was twenty. I'm twenty-six. Six years of having one's own way— Oh, girls, if we were the praying kind, I'd ask you to pray that I may make him happy!"

"Happy!" they cried in tender scorn of her humility. "He's the luckiest man alive!"

The knocker fell against the door panel. Lucy's face grew paler, her large eyes larger. She kissed the two girls with lips that had grown cold, and pushed them gently out of the room. And then, looking at him strangely for a second, she held out her hands to Halloran. He drew her softly to him, and kissed her beneath the new French hat.

"Darling, how very fine you are!" he cried. "And you've been pretending that this was not to be a dressy affair at all!"

At the sound of his easy, tranquil voice, of his mellow, deep-toned laugh, at the sight of his tall, slightly slouching figure, his thin, kind, rather rudely modeled face; at the touch of his hands and his lips, the chill of fear that had gripped her a few minutes before seemed to disappear. A shadowy, unknown future, big with possibilities of disaster, of struggle, vanished like a mist in the sun; a dear, cheerful, happy-go-lucky future, a future now lavish, now lean, joyous with work and companionship and love—this was what took its place as she saw Halloran in the flesh.

"Oh, Hall!" she cried jubilantly, in her relief from the clutch of unfamiliar emotions. "Wait till I phone for the porter to carry my bags down to the

taxis. And—shall we stop at the bank on our way to church, or on our way from it?" She waved the check gayly before his face.

"What's that?" drawled Halloran.

She explained in a breathless sentence.

"And now we can really go down to Kentucky for our honeymoon instead of to—what was it you said?—Newark or Long Island City!" she exulted.

But he shook his head. The clasp of his hands upon her arm grew looser.

"I'm afraid not, Luty, dear," he said gently.

"But why not?"

"Because, Luty, honey, I can't afford the Kentucky trip."

"But I've just shown you that we can!" cried Lucy. "Here's a check, dropped out of heaven, as it were—"

"Your check, Lucy," interrupted Hal, emphasizing the pronoun of ownership.

"Our check!" declared Lucy, with equal or even superior emphasis. Lord smiled tolerantly, and said nothing. "We can use it, can't we," she went on wheedlingly, "to go to Kentucky?"

"No, Lucy."

"But how absurd!" she said hotly. "It's what we both want to do. We both want to go down to your own part of the world and to see the scenes and the people of your youth, and to ride horseback and to— Oh, it's ridiculous! Why, we've already settled that we are both to work, both to make what money we can, both to contribute to the support of our common life! Will you tell me why you are going to be obstinate about this—the very first thing I've ever asked you on our wedding day?"

"Lucy, dear, all that you've said is perfectly true. We've agreed that we are both to be workers—you have certainly as much talent as I, if not a lot more, and it would be criminal to stop your work. Besides, we couldn't afford it." He laughed, half whimsi-

cally, half ruefully. "And, of course, there's no valid objection to it in this stage of the world's history. But—we don't go halves on our honeymoon, dear. That's my party."

The look of rebelliousness persisted for a minute in her face. He lifted it toward his, with a hand beneath her chin.

"Say you understand, Lucy!" he commanded her.

Her gray eyes softened, glowed. The gay color ran across her cheeks. She expanded into a flowerlike prettiness of submission.

"Of course I understand, Hal, though your scruples may still seem to me to belong to the neolithic period. And you shall have your own way about your honeymoon—but it's the last time. You know that? You are prepared for that? You are prepared to be bossed?"

"What was it the good people used to say in my childhood days? Something about 'kissing the rod.' I'm prepared to kiss the rod you wield, Lucy, all the rest of my life."

And then, through a crack in their door, the Dent girls watched the two make their way to the elevator. They watched the look of pride that Halloran Lord bent upon his bride, the air of protection with which he escorted her. And they told each other that it was a lovely wedding, though so very queer! And that it was a thousand pities Lucy had no relatives but a stepmother who had always treated her with traditional stepmotherly coldness—a stepmother who was, moreover, at present touring Europe on the money that ought—so the Dent girls thought—to have been Lucy's. And that it was a pity Halloran had no near relatives, only distant kinsfolk in Kentucky.

"It seems such a forlorn way to be married," sighed Fanny, who was sentimental. "Still, it could never be forlorn to marry Lucy if you were a man, or

Halloran if you were a woman. So —oh, Corny, it's five minutes after twelve. Do you suppose he's promising to love, cherish, and protect her at this very minute?"

"He's probably endowing her with all his worldly goods," retorted Cornelia, but with no malice in her satire. And they both laughed.

CHAPTER II.

Before the coming of Lucy, Halloran Lord's studio had been a big barn, dusty, rather cheerless, and entirely unadorned. But with young Mrs. Lord's advent it changed marvelously. Lucy had been wont to tell her lover, in the early days of their engagement, that he did not know to how sybaritic a person he was intrusting his future; but as she always said it when he was lapped in comfort and joy, he had not taken the saying very seriously. However, since their return from the April trip to the Delaware Water Gap—they had achieved a journey a trifle beyond Newark, and had spent a month of happiness, tramping miles upon miles a day, climbing mountains, sketching waterfalls, searching for hepaticas and violets, and watching the pale-green efflorescence of spring clothe the landscape with shimmering beauty—he had learned to know Lucy's luxuriousness for something more than a prettily self-accusatory phrase. It was September now, and Halloran, looking about, could scarcely realize that this room was his old workshop.

It was charming, of course—trust Lucy for that! Across the gallery rail was hung some beautiful Italian stuff she had brought home with her from her student days abroad. From her own old studio there had been moved in two or three "really good" chairs—Jacobean, she proclaimed them, and told, with the collector's pride, how wonderfully cheap she had secured

them. These, of course, had set the standard for all the new belongings they had purchased. The floor was covered with lovely old rugs, mellowed and softened by age to a bloom as delicate as that of ripe fruits. The walls at one end of the big room were lined with low, built-in bookcases, in which a marvel of a cabinetmaker, unearthed by the discoverer, Lucy, had reproduced the tone and style of their Jacobean chairs and tables. From storage houses she had called in their long-absent books, and these were ranged along the shelves, giving the big room the homelike touch that only books know how to give. In a cabinet, built in conformity to their other pieces, there were some lovely bits of Venetian glass, a piece or two of Chinese porcelain, and a yard of ivory lace that would not have disgraced a museum. It was a delightful room now, the big studio; the chief fault Halloran found with it was that too many people found it delightful.

For instance, as he came in on this particular afternoon out of a September drizzle, he saw that the tea table was drawn up close to the stone cavern of a fireplace. That was as usual. By the array of cups and saucers he perceived that he was not the only person to whom Lucy expected to administer the fragrant pekoe that afternoon—and that was somewhat as usual. He frowned a little; it was all very charming, of course—the Italian fillet cover laid beneath the Sheffield tray—both such bargains, according to Lucy, that it would have been criminal not to buy them—the firelight rosy upon the old blue Staffordshire cups that had been her grandmother's, the asters, pale pink and violet and as feathery as chrysanthemums, in the silver loving cup that had been presented to a commodore of his ancestry by the men who had served under him in the Mexican War— Oh, it was all very

pretty, but he had come in with a sheaf of bills in his pocket, and he wanted to see Lucy alone.

He whistled a bar from "Carmen" to announce his presence. The door of their bedroom on the gallery opened, and Lucy called down to him gayly. Looking up, he caught a glimpse of her in her floating pale-blue negligee, twisting her hair with swift, deft motions; he caught a glimpse, too, of the pretty chintz hangings and the old-fashioned mahogany furnishings of the room. Lucy had been so rejoiced to have a "truly" bedroom, after her years of make-believe divans behind a screen, that he would have felt a brute not to let her have it as pretty as she pleased! Besides, of course, Lucy was a heavy contributor to the household funds.

"Hello, Hal, dear! You didn't take a long walk, did you? I'll be down in a jiffy. Which would you wear—your apricot tea gown or your blue Chinese coat—if you were I?"

"Who's coming?" asked Halloran.

"Our benefactor, Mr. John Enwright, of *Hearth and Heart*, and his sister, Mrs. Lounsbury, of Lounsbury Cove. You know—the Lounsburys who keep on having a colonial estate somewhere near Astoria—so much smarter than a new estate in the most fashionable place on earth! Which shall I wear, Hally?"

"I like you in both—either—" answered Halloran vaguely. "What are they coming for?"

"I think I'll wear the apricot yellow. The Chinese coat looks a little artisty, I'm afraid, and I want to be just fine lady. They're coming because Mrs. Lounsbury is simply dying to meet the gifted creator of the 'Bosky Babes.'"

"She'll have to meet a power of people to do that!" jeered Halloran. "Kate Greenaway, Phil May, Rose O'Neill, the Billiken person— Say, Luty, you never have confessed from

how many sources you cribbed those babies!"

"Never mind!" retorted Lucy, appearing upon the gallery in the apricot tea gown, and proceeding down the stairs. "Those babies are doing very well for us. And I combined, rather than cribbed. They're becoming terribly popular—and only three months old! Mr. Enwright says that as soon as a garter company asks permission to use the name, we shall have touched the highest pinnacle of success."

She came up to her husband as he stood before the fireplace, dumping the ashes from his pipe into the blaze. She put her hands on his shoulders, and he turned and looked at her.

"Am I all right?" she demanded.

He kissed her.

"You'll make the Lounsbury, of Lounsbury Cove, look like thirty cents—if that's what you want!" he told her, laughing. "But I wish you weren't doing those pesky babes."

"'Bosky Babes,'" corrected Lucy.

"Pesky," insisted Halloran. "The little brats, half vulgar, half inane, imitative, and—er—cheap—Confess it, Lucy!"

"Oh, they're not the highest art, I admit," returned Lucy. But although she spoke in an impersonal tone, she withdrew a step or two from Halloran. Then, lest he should suspect her of having done so in resentment, she began rearranging the asters in the bowl.

"And they take you from so much more important work," he went on seriously.

Lucy looked at him with coldness.

"But we must be grateful to them for what they do for us," she reminded him. "Really, the 'Boskies' have given us quite a charming place in which to live!" She surveyed the room with approval.

"We needn't have had such expensive charm," insisted Halloran. "And"—he drew the sheaf of bills from his

pocket—"the 'Bosky Babes' haven't really given it to us yet."

"Oh, but they will," answered Lucy confidently, though with a little chill. "Please don't worry, Halloran. I—"

The knocker sounded, and the conference of the committee on ways and means, as Halloran sometimes called it, came to an end. Mrs. Lounsbury and her brother entered the room in the wake of Lucy's Italian maid, Maria, a picturesque person who gave to the small festivities of the studio something of the effect of a fancy-dress party, with her long earrings, her full white blouse, and her black corset. The Lords greeted their guests with the enthusiasm which only those visitors inspire whose arrival postpones a disagreeable discussion.

Mrs. Lounsbury, a woman verging upon forty, thin, small, dark, wiry, and animated, ran hastily through the accepted list of remarks appropriate upon visiting a studio for the first time.

"What charming things you have! What a delightful way to live! I wonder why I don't have the courage to try it myself! One gets so in a rut and loses all initiative. What enchanting cups!"

Lucy smiled and said the proper, half-proud, half-deprecating things about her possessions. John Enwright, with an air of great ease and familiarity, drifted about the studio, calling his sister's attention to this treasure and to that "bully" piece. He was a tall, good-looking young man, with an air of imperturbable good humor and friendliness. He was as poor as his sister Mrs. Lounsbury was rich, she having prudently married the money to which she had not been born. But what the Enwrights had lacked in filthy lucre, they had abundantly made up in social standing. One of the things that caused Halloran Lord cordially to disapprove of Mr. Enwright was Lucy's obvious admiration of his acquaintance with the

fashionably placed people in New York. And that, palpably, was not a fault of Mr. Enwright's, but rather of Mrs. Lord's.

The chatter around the fireplace was very pleasant. Mrs. Lounsbury, for all the slightly metallic quality of her voice, her manner, and her mind, as far as that was revealed in conversation, was an intelligent woman, shrewd though quick in her judgments, sometimes witty in their expression. And even Halloran, despite the somewhat sulky frame of mind in which he had found himself, and his half-smoldering dislike of Enwright, was never able to withstand completely the charm of that young man's intimately cordial manner.

They had talked of the new books, and even a little of the old books; of the new plays and the new artists; of the possibilities afforded Mr. Enwright's executive ability as editor of *Hearth and Heart*; of the "Bosky Babes," and of the popularity that those infants had attained since their first appearance in the June issue; of Europe, horses, country clubs, and all the similar appurtenances of wealth, which Mrs. Lounsbury flatteringly seemed to assume were as much of an everyday matter to the young artists in their old-fashioned studio as to herself.

It was amazing, even a little disheartening, to Halloran to see with what entire naturalness Lucy fell into her visitors' attitude. He knew that her three years' study abroad had been accomplished only by the most heart-breaking struggle and economy. He knew that her forbears, like his own, had been, though now and then distinguished, a plain-living folk, to whom the luxuries and frivolities of life had been utterly unfamiliar. Of course, during her six years in New York she had picked up all sort of acquaintances, rich as well as impecunious, fashionable, or at any rate pseudo-fashionable, as well as simple. But among her own

friends, in the circle that she really frequented, there were no people to whom these vanities and gauds were matters of course. It was not, of course, that she was posing as a rich woman, that she was pretending to anything she did not own; but quite casually, quite unconsciously, she assumed a little air of intimacy with the trappings of wealth that annoyed and discouraged him.

Before she gathered together her light wraps, her tulle neck ruff, her gold-mounted brocaded bag, to depart, Mrs. Lounsbury looked at the Lords with a rather pretty expression of appeal on her thin, dark, piquant face.

"It was awfully good of you to let me come, Mrs. Lord," she said. "I've been crazy to meet you. But I'm one of those awful persons who take an ell if given an inch. I want you two people to come down to me for a week at the Cove. Will you?"

"My dear!" cried John Enwright in mock astonishment and disapproval. "This is so sudden!"

Halloran and Lucy laughed, but Mrs. Lounsbury shook her head at him.

"Now you keep out of it, Johnnie," she commanded. "This is a matter between Mrs. Lord and me. Don't tell me that you and Mr. Lord are too busy to come butterflying for a whole week," she added to Lucy. "You'll be doing a work of benevolence, if that appeals to you—I have a British academician on my hands, and not a soul to address him intelligently."

"I'm sure I should love to come," said Lucy, looking toward Halloran a little dubiously.

"Well, then," declared Mrs. Lounsbury promptly, "Mr. Lord has simply got to love to also. You will, won't you?" she added, turning directly to him.

"It will be delightful, of course," answered Halloran slowly. "It's very good of you to ask us. I'm sure the change will do Lucy good——"

By and by they were gone, with a little shower of farewell speeches, the date of the visit arranged, the beginning of a new friendship apparently made. Lucy walked back toward the fireplace with a smile curving her lips, a deepened light of pleasure in her gray eyes.

"How did you like her, Hal?" she asked as she settled herself in a low chair among the cushions. Halloran, as usual, was engaged in tinkering with his pipe. Lucy sometimes said that it took an hour's manipulation of the instrument to give him fifteen minutes' smoke. This time his occupation sufficed to keep his eyes away from his wife.

"Oh, she's all right of her type, I suppose," he said grudgingly.

"I thought she was delightful," said Lucy crisply. "So sure of herself, so easy, so sophisticated, and yet so simple and friendly. And that was a duck of a dress she had on."

"Was it?" inquired Halloran, with a marked lack of interest.

"If we go down to Lounsbury Cove for a week," pursued Lucy, ignoring the warning signal in his voice, "don't you think I ought to have a new habit? I mean"—she corrected herself with a laugh—"a habit. I haven't any at all now. If we had gone to Kentucky, I should have had to buy one then. She spoke of riding a lot, didn't she?"

"She spoke of every sport known to the human race which costs money," retorted Halloran hostilely.

Lucy looked at him with a fleeting expression of coldness on her lovely face. She opened her lips as if to speak, but closed them again with a look which denoted that she was putting a noble, martyrlike restraint upon her impulses. Somewhat ostentatiously, she arose and trailed her apricot-yellow draperies across the big room to the stairs that led to the gallery. But even as her slippers foot touched the low-

est step, she had a change of heart. Turning, she ran back across the room and flung herself down beside her gloomy spouse.

"Dearest," she said very tenderly, "you're cross, I know, because that wretch of a Macheath made you so miserable an offer on 'Spring Rain.' I don't blame you, but you don't have to accept it, you know. Thanks to the despised 'Bosky Babes,' we aren't obliged to yield to any highwayman of a picture dealer. So cheer up, darling. Let's go out for dinner; shall we?"

Halloran had ceased to study either the flames or the bowl of his pipe, as soon as he saw her flying shadow across the floor. When she knelt beside him and laid her round, white arms across his knees, the almost surly look he had been wearing evaporated. He stroked her curly hair while she made her little speech.

"I suppose Macheath had something to do with my blue devils," he admitted. "But— Oh, I don't know what's the matter with me! The weather, partly, I suppose—these three-day rains are too much. And I dare say your friend Enwright's agreeable air of knowing it all and having it all made me a trifle jealous and envious. And—I hate to speak of them, Luty, darling, but I've got to—" He removed his hand and, fumbling in his pockets, drew out a little bunch of bills.

"Bills!" cried Lucy recognizingly, but not welcomingly. "Oh, Halloran, dear, why do you open the abominable things? I never do unless I know that I have enough money to pay them. Then I don't mind seeing them. But when one hasn't the money, you can't think what a help it is just to refuse to open them, to refuse to look at them. The insides are so much more—permanent in their effects than the out—"

"That's an awfully careless, slipshod way of doing," returned Halloran.



It was amazing, even a little disheartening, to Halloran to see with what entire naturalness Lucy fell into her visitors' attitude.

"Well," sighed Lucy in a long-suffering manner, "if that's the way you feel about it, let's look at them and

get it over with. Who are they from, anyway?"

"Well, this one"—Halloran drew an

inclosure from its envelope—"is from the man who did your room. I mean the upholsterer, not the furniture people," he added grimly. Then he read: "Bill rendered July 1st—sixty-five dollars."

"That hand-blocked English chintz is awfully dear," sighed Lucy. "I wonder if the upholsterer didn't cheat us."

"We can't inquire into that at this late day. Besides, didn't you tell me that you were following him closely yourself? And that you had known all about him for years?"

"Yes, I did. I dare say it's all right. Of course I had that set of shirt-waist boxes covered after I had given the original order. That brought it up. Well, what next?"

"Here's one," replied Halloran, taking up the next bill, "from Mathilde. Bill rendered May 1st—sixty-five dollars." That seems to be a favorite sum of yours, Lucy."

"Why on earth doesn't she send the bill to me?" inquired Lucy, snatching at it. Her cheeks were red with annoyance, and her eyes defiantly bright. "You have nothing whatever to do with this bill. It's for things I bought before I was married—a hat and a blouse. She has no business to send it to you."

"I think she was quite justified in sending it to me," he replied rather sternly, "since it has been due her for nearly six months. Come, come, Lucy, we can't go on this way. We're not rich people; we're poor people. We're working people. We must fit our expenses to our income—"

"I prefer," said Lucy, with an obstinate lifting of her chin as she arose from her humble position on the floor, "to bring my income within hailing distance of my expenses! It's all very well for bachelors and bachelor women to rough it, to be poverty-stricken and out at the elbows, to live grubbily. But it doesn't do for a settled-married man or woman—for a family. Once one

marries, one has a position to maintain," she went on oracularly.

"Yes," Halloran struck in, in quick agreement. "One has a position to maintain. One must be a solvent citizen."

"Oh, nonsense!" Lucy's manner was almost snappish. "And please don't worry any more about those bills, Halloran. I'll have a check from *Hearth and Heart* next week and I'll settle them."

She walked off again toward the gallery stairs, and this time she did not turn back. Halloran sat in front of the dying fire. There was a dull flush as of wounded pride upon his pale face.

CHAPTER III.

"My dear," cried Evangeline Lounsbury warmly to Lucy, "don't bother about it. We've all been up against it. I'm continually in debt to next month's allowance. I'm always having to borrow money. Fortunately, my own maid is a person of means. How she does it I'm sure I don't know, but she always has at least a hundred dollars when I need it. So don't think about this thing again. I'll settle with Jimmy Roderick myself, and you can pay me whenever you get around to it."

They were in Mrs. Lounsbury's sitting room—a pretty little pink-and-green-and-gilt apartment which had already made Lucy incline to the thought of doing over her own room. The hostess was in a morning gown, pink and green, to match her surroundings apparently. Lucy, who had come in from an early canter, was looking extremely well in a riding habit, with a little three-cornered hat perched upon her head. But in spite of the freshness and jauntiness of her appearance, there was a look of worry upon her face. She had, on the night before, indulged for the first time in the pre-

curious pastime of playing auction for money, and the result had been disastrous to her. At the end of the evening she had found herself owing Mrs. Lounsbury and Mrs. Lounsbury's partner, Major James Roderick, nearly forty dollars.

She had been dumfounded when she had been told the result. Somehow, she had had the hazy impression that she had been playing for a cent a point, and it had appeared, when the scores were settled, that she had been playing for ten cents a point. She had lain awake half the night thinking about it. It had been easy enough for her to escape payment at the time, because she was staying in the house and so was Major Roderick, while her partner, young Fred Willets, had merely come in for the evening from an adjoining place. She didn't have forty dollars with her; she didn't think there were forty dollars in the joint bank account that she and Halloran had set up on their return from their honeymoon. Anyway, even if there were money in the bank, she could not use it without exposing herself to her husband's judgment. And that she particularly wished to avoid.

Things were not going as smoothly between them as she could wish. He had been averse to their coming to the Lounsburys for the week, when he had discovered to what expenses it would put them. For Lucy had insisted that an autumn visit in the country without riding clothes and evening clothes and a new, fitted, toilet case was quite out of the question. She realized that Halloran had thought her stubborn and headstrong in her expenditures—perhaps even selfish, though she had tried to make him outfit himself for the occasion as gorgeously as she was outfitted. It was in vain that she had told herself that she was proposing to spend only the money that she meant to earn. She had felt his disapproval

even after he had ceased to combat her intentions.

No, she could not confide to Halloran at this moment that she had just lost forty dollars in gambling. It was easier to say, with as much of an off-hand and swaggering air as she could command, to Evangeline Lounsbury, that she was really criminally destitute at the moment. And certainly Evangeline's manner of taking the information had been all that was friendly. Nevertheless, there was a stinging of blood under her cheeks as she received the lady's confidence in regard to her own usual financial condition.

Before she left the Cove, however, she had learned how she could pay off her debt. It was one morning in the nursery that the information was given to her.

"You know, I'm sincere in saying that I'm perfectly crazy about those 'Bosky Babes' of yours. And now that John has that clever rhyming person—what's his name?—to do verses to go with them I think they're quite the most amusing things in the world. Do you know what I've been wishing?"

Lucy admitted that she was unable to guess Mrs. Lounsbury's desires.

"I'd give anything in the world if I could get you to do a sort of frieze of them for the nursery walls," said Mrs. Lounsbury. "She shot a keen, appraising glance at her guest.

"Oh, I don't know anything at all about decorative painting. I never did a bit in my life. Halloran has had some experience—he did a hotel ballroom up in the Berkshires once."

"Splendid!" cried Mrs. Lounsbury. "He can tell you exactly how it's done. Perfectly magnificent! That means that if you were to furnish the designs, or even to allow us to copy some of those that have already appeared in the *Hearth and Heart*, Mr. Lord might superintend the doing of the work. Would it be fearfully expensive?"

"I really don't know," answered Lucy uncomfortably. "Of course you could have anything that I have already done for nothing. Or I could make you a new set."

She looked up toward the low ceiling of the room. The Lounsbury house had been constructed by throwing out wings and ells upon a revolutionary farmhouse, and the nursery, in this ancient portion of the building, was low-roofed.

"It would be rather amusing, I think," went on Lucy, kindling, "to do a little season frieze—the 'Bosky Babes' engaged in various seasonal activities, you know; snowballing and sledding and making snow men and snow forts in the winter, blowing soap bubbles, flying kites, planting little seeds in little gardens for the spring—that sort of thing. How would you like it?"

"It would be perfectly enchanting. Only it seems far too much to ask of you."

"Oh," answered Lucy, "I should do it quite roughly and on a large scale, so that it really wouldn't involve so much work. And I'll talk to Halloran about the practical part of it—getting measurements and getting the canvas on the walls, I mean."

Whereupon, she was given to understand that she and her husband were quite the dearest people in the world; and furthermore, that there was to be no further mention of the bridge debt between her and her amiable hostess. But she realized perfectly that she was to do a hundred dollars' worth of work to cancel a forty-dollar debt—and to pay for a week "in society."

It was on the day of the Lords' departure that this talk occurred. Back in the studio again, a good deal of the gilding seemed already worn off the enterprise. She felt that she had been outrageously "worked." She was as much afraid to tell Halloran what she had promised as she had been afraid to

tell him what she had done in regard to the card debt.

And then it happened to Lucy, as it has happened to many another conscience-smitten soul, that she tried to justify herself by accusing something outside herself for her misfortunes.

"He has no right to take that attitude with me," she thought. "If I spend a lot of money, and if I spend it in a way that seems to him foolish, at any rate it's my own. I earn it. I hate those absurd infants as much as he does, but I"—her lip quivered with self-pity—"I am willing to sacrifice my artistic pride, for a little while at least, in order that our home, our new home, may be lovely and our life together—our life together—"

She broke down and wept, hiding her face in her pillow at the thought of the renunciations she was willing to make for their happiness. And, as a lady bedewed with the tears of self-pity is seldom a logical being, she did not consider that her sacrifices seemed to be in vain, so far as the beauty of their existence was concerned.

But at least her little private collapse had one result. She made sure that she had no more tears to shed, and decided that that fact made the time a fitting one to tell Halloran of her "commission." That was what she would name it in her talk with him.

Halloran had been out all the afternoon, making some studies from one of the new East River bridges. She heard his step in the studio, his whistle to her, as she rubbed the last traces of tears from her face. She opened the bedroom door and looked out. Despite her grievance and her dread of Halloran's reception of her news, she was too much in love with him not to feel a singing along her veins at the sound of his return after a few hours' absence, at the sight of his slouching, but not ungraceful, tall figure, and his homely, attractive face.

"Hello, Hal, dear," she called. "Good afternoon?"

"Fine—bully!" replied Halloran, with enthusiasm. "It was the best afternoon I've had there yet."

"I'll be down in a minute," called Lucy.

She put on one of her old dresses—one that he had used to admire when he came "courting" at the old studio. She smiled at herself in the long mirrors she had had screwed, only last week, inside her closet doors, French fashion. She thought the reflection was one of a girl whom even the sternest husband would find it hard to scold. And Halloran—bless him!—was so very far from a stern husband.

As she came down the gallery stairs, he was standing at the table, his sketches laid out before him, looking them over with satisfaction while he puffed at his perpetual pipe. She slid over to his side, and, without looking away from the studies, he put an arm about her shoulders and began to talk.

"That," he said, indicating a rough set of pencil marks on the sketch, "was the prettiest thing you ever saw, Lucy—or didn't see. I never saw it before—a square-rigged bark coming in under full sail. Wonderful! Among all those tugs and ferries and smokestacks—it was beautiful. Like a medieval princess walking along Broadway; like the moon struggling through a crowd of clouds. Like—I don't know what."

She looked up at his lean, enthusiastic, homely, kind face, and she felt that she loved him very deeply. She admired him, too. She admired his workmanship, but, more than that, she admired his vision. He was to be a great painter some day! Meantime—there was Mrs. Lounsbury's nursery to tell him about.

"Dearest," she said, pulling him over to the davenport, "I am glad there's one potboiling talent in this gifted

family. For"—she added earnestly—"it may give the un-potboiling talent a chance to do its own work unhampered. Please don't pull away from me."

"But I don't like to hear you call yours a potboiling talent. And neither do I care to hear that mine, such as it is, couldn't keep a pot of reasonable dimensions boiling. No man who has married a woman he loves wants to feel that he isn't regarded as quite—capable—by her."

This time it was Lucy who withdrew from his embrace.

"No such thought was even implied!" she cried. "But don't let us begin on the true creed of the true artist. I only wanted to tell you that—I have a sort of commission from Mrs. Lounsbury."

"That's good," said Lord warmly. "Herself or one of the children?"

"Neither." Lucy flushed. "She only wants a frieze of 'Boskies' in the nursery."

"Oh, I see." He spoke heavily. "I had hoped— But never mind! I don't suppose we could live on my salary as an instructor at the league, and the few things I manage to sell. But I do hate to have you doing those things. What's she going to pay you?"

Lucy's hands were busy with a refractory fringe on a scarf she had dropped upon the sofa; her eyes were busy with it also, so that she could not conveniently meet Halloran's as she answered: "We didn't talk price. What would be a fair price for the work?"

"Oh, I don't know. Six months ago, before those blamed little hybrid monsters of yours had begun to bring you into popular notice, I suppose a couple of hundred would have been as much as you could have stung her. Now, however, with all sorts of magazines fighting to have you illustrate for them—five hundred would be moderate enough. And, considering Lounsbury's millions, a thousand wouldn't be be-

yond the limits of the human fancy. But I hate to have you do it, Lucy, for any amount."

Lucy, thinking of what was practically her receipted bill for forty dollars, smiled in a strained way and murmured something about "the advertising value" of the undertaking. But Halloran frowned and got up to walk back and forth impatiently.

"It's the sort of advertising that I hate for you," he said. "I hate to have your name so closely associated with this sort of thing that you'll never be able to outlive its popularity and get down to real, worth-while work. That's the trouble with an unworthy success—a cheap popularity; it's so hard to outgrow. Now you—you can draw—you can paint! You've got insight, humor—real humor, not the pretense of funniness you've smeared over the 'Boskies.' You should be doing portraits, not these trumped-up children of your fancy—and half a dozen other people's fancy! But I suppose you're in for the frieze now—unless," he added hopefully, "you could beg off on the ground that your inspiration has failed you?"

"I'm afraid I can't."

"You sound depressed, dear. Have I been scolding too hard? I'm a brute to complain when you're such a soldier, Lucy. It would suit me better to try to gain a little popularity myself, rather than find fault with yours. Only—you know we don't need to live on this scale." He waved his pipe around the room.

"Oh, I grubbed along too long to endure it any longer!" cried the girl vehemently. She was putting into her manner some of the pent-up anger she felt against Evangeline Lounsbury. But Halloran felt as if it were a reproach directed toward him.

There is probably no more difficult task ever laid upon a young husband who is in love with his wife than the

curbing of her extravagance. That the difficulty of the undertaking is many times multiplied when the wife has an income larger than her husband's is axiomatic. We are used to the industrial independence of woman as a catchword, nowadays; but realizing it in life is another matter. Added to all this, Halloran Lord was a sensitive man. The first six months of his marriage had not passed before he was in a state approaching diffidence with Lucy.

He had never thought much about the nature of his talent; he had never boasted of his ideals of art. Yet, from the time when he had first undertaken to make painting his career, it had never occurred to him to do anything less than his best. In the early days, that had sometimes meant copying pictures of the masters for customers who were content, or whose income forced them to make themselves content, with copies. But even that work he had done with uncommon delicacy and skill. There had been years when he had supported himself by it, and he had a high reputation among the dealers for the surety and delicacy of his touch.

But suddenly, one day, a year or two before he had met Lucy, he had given up copying. Thinking the question over, out in the woods back of his Aunt Sallie's place in the country—with his invariable counselor, his pipe, in his mouth—he had decided that what he was doing would eventually prove the ruin of his own individuality as an artist. Once that had been decided, there had been no question in his mind about what his course should be. Halloran, although he had as yet sold nothing of his own, had stopped copying, had reduced his expenses almost to the vanishing point, and had endured the rebuffs and discouragements of dealers who advised him not to give up his modestly lucrative vein.

Eventually he had found a new, but

not less laborious, means of making a living. He did not particularly enjoy his teaching, was not, indeed, of the material of which the great teachers are made. But at any rate, the drudgery seemed to him less likely to be of injury to him than the other occupation.

And now he found himself delightfully housed with the most charming wife in the world, with the most lovable wife in the world, and he was far from happy. In the first place, he could not altogether understand Lucy. He lived too much in a world of his own creation to be greatly troubled by any barrenness or inharmoniousness in his physical surroundings. Of course, now that Lucy had made their place really delightful, really luxurious, he appreciated the difference between it and the barracks in which he had contentedly dwelt until her coming. But there were many days when he felt that they—at any rate that Lucy was paying far too high a price for the elegance that so sparklingly became her. Yet there was always a practical difficulty about telling her so—the oppressive difficulty of the fact that it was her money that bought and paid for, sooner or later—though it was generally later—all the conveniences, all the graces, with which she had furnished the studio.

Of course, the commission, as Lucy continued to call it, from Mrs. Lounsbury entailed other visits to the Cove. Young Mrs. Lord explained cheerfully to her reluctant husband that it was really a good thing they received more invitations—it made the new clothes purchased for the first visit less of a wild extravagance; it acquainted her with possible future sitters; it gave her a glorious opportunity to study modern types. She found innumerable advantages in the connection, and all of Halloran's objections to what he called the waste of time, the waste of money, the sheer, cruel waste of artistic energy in

social pursuits, she gayly blew away as if they had been so much thistledown. Sometimes she assumed an air of vulgarly commercial wisdom that sat funnily upon her mad irresponsibility, and declared that it was even to her advantage thus to "cinch" her agreement with the editor of *Hearth and Heart*.

"You know John Enwright is awfully easily influenced," she would say sapiently, "especially by the opinions of his own caste, his own set. Nothing could make him so sure that the 'Bosky Babes'—those pet abominations of yours, ungrateful boy—as if they didn't pay for all the jam on our bread!—nothing could make him so sure that they are works of art worthy to rank with the Raphael cherubs as the fact that I can talk the language of his crowd, and get on well with it—that I can dance like his sister's set, and keep on a horse when it's necessary. So it isn't all an extravagance, our going to Lounsbury Cove so much, Hal. It's an investment."

"Oh, since you like that crowd!" Halloran would groan, half indulgent, half impatient, wholly unimpressed by her sophistries.

"Like?" Lucy would exclaim, aggrieved. "I've just been showing you that it's plain business. Mrs. Drew spoke only yesterday of having me do a picture of her and her little girl. She's coming one afternoon next week to talk with me about it."

"You mean that she's coming to have tea with you, and to stare about your quarters, and to call them charming, and to meet other 'interesting' people, other people 'who do things'—Heaven help them and her!—and to establish a friendly footing with you so that she may invite you to enliven some of her dull dinners, inject a little spice of novelty into her routine. Oh, you dear, intoxicated infant, you! When will you learn that these people get more than they give in all their bargaining?"

With her own private knowledge on this subject, Lucy could only murmur a half-hearted negative. And when she had murmured that, her native honesty would cause her suddenly to recant.

"I know you're really right, Hal," she would confess. "But I can't help it—I love the flesh-pots of Egypt! I had such a grubbing, skimped time—just let me have my little orgy, won't you? And I'll come to myself by and by!"

Whereupon, of course, he would kiss her, and wish disconsolately that his were a money-making talent, so that he might give her all her young heart's desires.

But in spite of the sweetness of this reconciliation, the feverish atmosphere of unrest and of dissension was not one in which Halloran could work. Not only was the spiritual atmosphere turbulent, but the actual physical quiet of the studio was shattered daily and hourly. The knocker on the heavy oak door was constantly clanging; the telephone was ringing perpetually. And then there were the bills. A budget of expense was something neither of them had ever considered. Halloran's general idea of household finance was to earn what one conveniently could, and then spend a little less; Lucy's was to spend what one wanted to, and then,



"Talk about the wind and the shorn lamb!" she cried jubilantly, waving the document before Halloran's angry, brooding eyes.

with heartbreaking effort, bring the earnings up to within hailing distance of expenses. She had made the discovery that she could work rapidly, that she was achieving a certain sort of vogue as an illustrator, and that by putting on a little extra pressure now and then, she could gratify her starved desire for pretty things, for gayeties, for the exercise of a picturesque hospitality—for all those money-and-time-absorbing things after which all of Lucy, except Lucy the artist, hungered greatly.

Each discovery by Halloran of new extravagance brought nearer and

nearer the ugly day when she would tell him that, if she contracted bills, her labor paid them. Each of them realized that this reply hovered in the air between them at every account-taking session—Halloran realizing it more keenly, indeed, than Lucy.

It was the incident of the black-lynx furs in December that precipitated their most serious quarrel.

It had been a comparatively quiet day in the studio. Halloran was working away at his East River picture, more contented with what he was doing than he had been for weeks. Lucy, after getting up before dawn to do the month's allotment of "Bosky Babes" for Mr. Enwright's eminent publication, had dashed off to a luncheon and a matinée. She was still so fresh and young that the speed at which she worked had not marred her beauty, but had, for the day at least, intensified it, lending new excitement to her eyes, new color to her cheeks.

As soon as the door had safely closed upon her, Halloran had quietly plugged the telephone, and, chuckling over his precaution against interruption, had gone on with his painting. Maria had received stern instructions from him to allow no one to enter the studio. Though the knocker had fallen once or twice, he had not been disturbed; the stout, middle-aged Italian woman, in her noiseless list slippers, had glided quietly across the floor and disposed of the intruders without bothering him. At noon, without annoying him by vain questions or announcements, she had quietly placed a little stand near his easel, and on it had set a bowl of soup and a plate of bread. Halloran was having just the sort of day at home he liked.

It was about four o'clock when the falling of the knocker against the panel of the door was followed by a longer colloquy on Maria's part than usual. Finally she slip-slapped her way back

through the hall and across the studio to where he sat, surveying his tangle of masts with a faint sense of pleasure. He turned and smiled forgiveness upon her pleading countenance.

"All right, Maria. I was going to call it a day, anyway. What's the trouble?"

Maria presented a blue envelope bearing in its upper left-hand corner the name of a distinguished furrier.

"The boy, he no leave the box without the money," she announced.

Halloran took the unsealed envelope, directed to his wife, and withdrew the inclosure. It announced that Jacquard Frères had that day sold to Mrs. Halloran Lord one set of black-lynx furs for three hundred dollars. The furs had been sent home C. O. D.

"I don't know anything about this, Maria," said Halloran heavily. "It may be a mistake. At any rate, we won't accept the package until Mrs. Lord comes home."

He replaced the bill in the envelope, handed it to Maria, and, rising, fumbled awkwardly for his tobacco and his pipe. He couldn't find them for a minute, though they were in plain sight upon his smoking table. All that his eyes seemed capable of focusing upon was a blue bill for black-lynx furs for three hundred dollars—and that when, only two days before, they had had much ado to gather together enough money to pay an enormous telephone bill which had seemed to indicate that his wife spent most of her waking time in long-distance conversations! It was too bad of Lucy, it was outrageous, it was unforgivable. They could not go on like this. He, for his part, absolutely refused to go on like this! He would tell Lucy so to-night. He would have it out with her, once and for all time. Either they would live within their income—within a modest income no larger than their equal contributions to it made it, or they would live apart.

A man could not work in any such harassing atmosphere. He would not stand it.

Lucy did not return for tea. He had half feared that she would come in attended by a noisy bevy, but she did not come at all. By and by, however, there arrived a messenger boy with a note. It read:

What on earth is the matter with the telephone? I've been trying to get you for an hour. We met Millicent Carson at the theater, and now I'm having tea with her at the Ritz. They want us to motor out with them for dinner and a dance at the Greensward Club to-night. I'm crazy to do it. Please tell Maria to pack my apricot charmeuse and fittings, your evening things, and an overnight bag. The boy will bring them back here to the hotel where the Carsons' car is waiting. Come as fast as you can.

YOUR LOVING L.

Halloran seated himself at a desk with a heavy frown on his forehead. He seized a pen and wrote so vehemently that he broke the point. He began again with a fresh nib and a fresh sheet of paper.

DEAR LUCY: Thank Mr. and Mrs. Carson for me for the invitation for to-night, and give them my regrets, but I cannot accept it. I am not giving Maria your message because, in view of something that has occurred here this afternoon, I think it much better that you should come home immediately after tea.

H. L.

Lucy, her face expressing a divided mind—partly fear of some calamity, partly indignation over any interference with her plans—burst into the studio half an hour later. Immediately behind her came the boy, returning from Jacquard Frères, with the box of black lynx and the blue-enveloped request for three hundred dollars.

"What's the matter, Hal?" she asked breathlessly, before she was well across the threshold of the studio.

Halloran smiled sardonically upon the furrier's boy following in her wake, as yet unperceived by her.

"I think the answer is just behind you," he replied grimly.

Lucy whirled about.

"C. O. D., three hundred dollars from Jacquard's," chanted the youth in green-and-gold livery, who bore the box.

"Oh!" Lucy's voice faltered a little. "But they were to be charged—charged to Mrs. Randolph Carson."

The boy looked at her unblinkingly.

"C. O. D. is the instructions," he said.

"There is some mistake," said Lucy firmly.

"I can telephone, ma'am, if you wish," replied the boy.

Lucy indicated the telephone in the corner. Halloran, remembering his device to secure a peaceful working day, crossed the room and removed two small wooden plugs. Lucy flashed an angry glance at him.

"So that's the reason I wasn't able to get you! I wasted half an hour after the matinée, calling up."

Meantime the boy was busy with Jacquard Frères. He turned away from the instrument with a noncommittal stolidity of expression.

"Some mistake, ma'am," he announced. "Mrs. Randolph Carson's account with the firm suspended. Shall I take the furs back?"

"Yes," answered Lucy, pale and stormy looking. Then her eyes fell upon some mail on the table. "Wait a minute." She took up a letter, opened it, drew out a check, and laughed. "Talk about the wind and the shorn lamb!" she cried jubilantly, waving the document before Halloran's angry, brooding eyes. "Just look at that! Three hundred dollars for four weeks' drawings for *Willis' Weekly!*" She turned toward the boy; she was flushed, happy, triumphant. "You may leave them," she said magnificently.

She indorsed the check to the order of the furrier, took the receipt, waved the boy out of the room, and began unfastening the box with eager fingers.

"And now will you kindly tell me

how you happen to be buying furs on Mrs. Carson's account?" asked Halloran, in a voice that almost shook with anger.

For a second Lucy did not pause in her delicious task of extracting the black, silky things from their tissue-paper wrappings. Indeed, before she replied, she had put the scarf about her neck and thrust her little hands into a big muff. Above the lustrous, jetlike beauty of the skins, her face was more brilliantly flowerlike than ever. She smiled at him, half teasing, half pleading. But neither beauty nor coquetry could beguile him from his just wrath.

"I'm in earnest, Lucy. This isn't parlor theatricals. I want to know what you mean by it."

She turned away and laid the muff and the scarf again in the box. Then slowly she faced him.

"I knew that *Willis'* owed me three hundred dollars," she said sullenly, "although I didn't expect it until next week. This is a four-hundred-and-fifty-dollar set. It was made to order, in the most exquisitely matched skins, for Mrs. Rutherford Haines, who died last week. I went to Jacquard's this afternoon, between luncheon and the matinée, with Millicent Carson. It's all nonsense about her account being suspended! They've mixed her up with some one else! The man showed her this set—begged her to buy it. But she couldn't take it; she'd already bought some Canadian fisher this winter. But she and the salesman—and my own common sense—with a flash of defiance for her husband from her gray eyes—"persuaded me to take advantage of the opportunity. Millicent Carson told me to charge it to her account when I said I didn't have the money."

"That seems to have been a very empty favor," said Halloran. "But that is neither here nor there. The point is that you are buying furs such as only a rich woman should wear, and you

are a poor woman, a working woman, and the wife of a poor man."

"There's no economy in buying cheap things," declared Lucy.

"You know you're talking nonsense, Lucy," returned Halloran. "It's mad extravagance for a woman in your position to do the things you do and to buy the things you buy. Please don't interrupt me," as he saw her mutinous lips open for a protest. "I'm well aware that it's your own money you are wasting. But you're wasting mine, too. It may be true that I paid only for a little tail on that neckpiece you were flaunting a minute ago, but I can't afford even that. I want to spend what little I have for bread and meat, for peace and the leisure to do good work. This sort of thing has got to stop, Lucy. We've got to begin afresh. Don't you think you've been on your spree long enough?"

At the end of his speech his voice had grown tender again, his face kind, his eyes a little beseeching. After all, despite the firmness of his own talk with himself that afternoon, he was a young man, and very much in love with the vivid, beautiful, impulsive, joyous creature opposite him. He came near her, he put his hands upon her shoulders. But she jerked away.

"I think I have a right to spend my own money as I please," she said. Her voice was cutting, she kept her eyes averted from his. "I'm quite willing to do my share toward our plain living expenses. But I think I have the right to use the balance of my income on a little gilt and gayety to brighten our drab, hard-working life. I think you're unkind and unreasonable."

He stood silent for a second or two. It had come, the declaration he had often heard in his premonitions of this moment—the declaration of money rights, the sharp assertion of *meum* and *tuum*. It was impossible to argue any longer. If Lucy could take that stand,

if Lucy could harbor those feelings, then the end had already come between them.

"You're placing me in a rather awkward position," he said, after a moment or two. "We'll talk about it a little later."

"Why not now?" demanded Lucy, her head flung high, her eyes angry, but her lips on the verge of quivering.

"Because I don't want to say anything for which I might be sorry," he answered sharply.

He crossed the room to the hall, and, without watching him, she knew that he had taken his hat and overcoat from the settle where they had been flung, and that he was putting them on. In another minute she heard the door close with that dull, reverberating sound of finality, of irrevocability, which a closing door always has in lovers' quarrels. She did not see him again that night. About ten o'clock he telephoned to her, and, with what she considered a heartless courtesy, informed her that he would not be home until the next afternoon, that he was spending the night with Fletcher, one of his old student comrades.

"Well, there's one thing certain," Lucy announced furiously to the studio, as she banged the telephone receiver back upon its hook. "I shan't be here waiting for him when he comes! Oh, thank goodness I can earn my own living! Thank goodness I'm not dependent on him for a single cent!"

But she knew the injustice of her accusation against him; she felt the guilt of her own position. She cried half through the lonely night in the pretty, chintz-hung, mahogany-furnished room in which she took so much delight. Then, exhausted, she slept until late the next morning.

When she awoke, she had for the minute forgotten the quarrel. When she remembered it, she was sure that he must have come back, that he must

be waiting down in the big workroom for her to come to breakfast. She ran to the gallery rail and looked down. Maria's was the only figure below her. She called to the servant—had not Mr. Lord come in yet? And at Maria's mellifluous "No, signora, no come yet," she began to feel angry again.

Halloran did not come back to the studio until four o'clock in the afternoon. When he came in, he walked swiftly, nervously, toward Maria's quarters. His face was white, and its muscles twitched. The old Italian knew, of course, that her young employers had had a tiff the night before; but she was truly astonished at the effect of it upon Halloran. Quarrels and reconciliations, in her philosophy, were part of the food of love, designed to nourish its flame. But Mr. Lord looked as if he were taking the foolish affair in the wrong way. She shook her wise head and debated within herself whether she should not speak a motherly word or two to him.

"Mrs. Lord—is she at home?" asked Halloran abruptly.

With all her heart Maria wished that Mrs. Lord had not gone forth only an hour ago, arrayed in all her most splendid attire, including the black-lynx furs! It was obviously a moment when the exigencies of reconciliation required her presence.

"No, signor, she is no here. All day she wait, but the signor no come. But just now I say to her: 'The signora must go out; the signora must have air, or she will lose all the pretty red, the bright eyes.' She has just gone. She will be back—" Maria used a gesture to signify that Mrs. Lord would be back before a kiss could be wafted from her fingers across the room. The mere fact that nothing she had said was true, except, as she believed, the bare fact of Lucy's absence, disturbed her not at all.

The gray, drawn look of anxiety on

Halloran's face grew sharper. He stood as if helpless for a minute. Then he abruptly left Maria's shining kitchen and hurried to the telephone. His forehead was beaded with sweat as he took off the receiver. He gave a number in jerking, nervous tones. At the sound of the voice at the other end, his face cleared.

"Thank God, you're there, Ritter!" he exclaimed. "Yes, this is Lord. I read last week that you were sailing yesterday for Antwerp. I don't know why I should have thought a miracle might have been wrought in the meantime, so that you couldn't go. Oh, that's it, is it? Well, I'm glad for my sake. I'm up against it, Ritter. I need three hundred dollars—right away. You remember my Aunt Sallie? She's got to be operated on for appendicitis within twenty-four hours. It's only by chance I found it out. All right, old man. Mail it to me to-night."

When he replaced the receiver upon the hook, there was again a normal color in his cheeks, and his grave, anxious face had lost its look of desperation.

Now, one of the fine-lady conveniences that Lucy had arranged for herself when she had refitted the studio was an extension telephone at her bedside. It was a very pretty little telephone, done, if you please, in china, flowered to match her chintzes. It stood upon the stand beside her bed.

When, that afternoon, after a miserable day, she had dressed herself with great care in her most gorgeous attire, and had announced to Maria that she was going out to tea, Lucy had had the full intention of carrying out her design. It would serve Halloran right not to find her at home when he returned. If he was going to sulk, she was not going to stay at home weeping her eyes out, weeping her heart out, and all for nothing. She was going out, she was going to enjoy herself, she was going to come home by and by,

and greet him, if he had returned, in a perfectly natural, easy manner.

And she had carried out her program to the extent of leaving the studio and ringing for the elevator. But before it had reached her floor on its slow, creaking upward journey, she had perceived that it would be perfectly impossible for her to face the sunlight and the streets and the smiling countenances of the world, until she had made it up with Halloran. So she had darted back to her own hall door again, and finding, by some unusual accident, her latchkey in her bag, she had opened the door without again showing Maria her injured countenance; she had somehow been ashamed to meet the old woman's wise black eyes. She had gone upstairs to her room, had removed the offensive furs and all her street clothes, and had again flung herself down to wait for Halloran's return.

The winter afternoon had deepened gently toward twilight. The silence of the studio below her had grown unbearable. She had decided that she would call up the Dent girls—if Halloran was going to be perfectly impossible, and to stay away another night, she was not going to spend the evening alone in that gloomy studio! Cornelius and Fanny must be at home. She had snatched the telephone up, had put the receiver to her ear—and had heard her husband telling Hans Ritter that he must have three hundred dollars.

Having heard so much, she listened to the end of the conversation. There was a throbbing in her throat so painful and so hard that it seemed likely to burst it. Poor, poor Hal! Poor, dear, old Aunt Sallie—the one relative whom he had left in the world! And to be put to this—to this cruel uncertainty as to the money for such a cause—and all because she, hateful, selfish, extravagant beast that she was—Her thoughts grew utterly incoherent ex-

cept for the vehemency of their self-reproach.

For a little while she lay quite still in the twilight, realizing, as she had never realized before, the depth of her feeling for Halloran. With the sharp perception of his anxiety, the keen sense of his need, there had sprung up in her the first shoot of that protective, maternal love which comes to be so largely commingled with wifely affection in happy marriages. Dimly, quite unconsciously, she felt what it would be to care for her children; she knew how deep would be the desire to spare them all need, all pangs of every sort, the hard physical pangs, the sharper pangs of mind and heart.

And along with all this, she glowed with the warm sense that she was not powerless to help either her husband to-night or those shadowy children of the future. She could help him now, as, by and by, she would be able to help them. Only, to-night, she must help with a discretion, a delicacy, that those dear children of the future would not demand of her, at any rate in the early days of their wants. She waited impatiently for Halloran to go out again, that she might be able to put her suddenly formed plan into execution.

The door of her room was closed, so that the lighter sounds from the studio did not reach her ears. But by and by she heard the reverberation of the outside door—that reverberation which last night had sounded like the death knell of love and happiness, and which to-night was merely the commonplace slamming of a commonplace hall door—and immediately she sprang erect. She switched on the lights in her pretty, flowery little room. By the foolish Dresden clock upon her writing table, she saw that it was only half past five.

"Thank goodness!" she cried fervently.

She twisted her tousled hair into a decorous knot while she waited for an answer to her call for a taxicab. She was out of her negligee, she had kicked off her embroidered Chinese slippers, before the receiver was well upon the hook again. And by the time the taxicab drew up in front of the studio building, she stood, correctly tailored, booted, and hatted, awaiting it, a big box with the label of *Jacquard Frères*, in her hand.

"You've got to get me to Fifth Avenue and Forty-seventh Street in ten minutes," she told the chauffeur, "if you break every speed law in the city doing it."

And by taking one of the more deserted western avenues, and not attempting Fifth Avenue until he was well uptown, he succeeded in landing her at the furriers' ten minutes before closing time.

"You've simply got to take these back," she told the elegant salesman, garmented and mannered like a diplomat in one of the great capitals of the world. "You've simply got to."

He remembered her, and although he was politely regretful that Mrs. Lord should not keep furs so obviously designed by Providence to set off her beauty, he thought there would be no difficulty in the matter of their return. He stepped across a few yards of velvet carpet and disappeared into some inner temple of Circassian walnut and silence, there to hold converse with his superiors. In a few moments he came back, smiling. In his hands he bore the pink check that only the night before she had so dashingly indorsed.

"We will, of course," he said, with magnificent, suave magnanimity, "take back the furs. And it so happens that your own check, Mrs. Lord, has not been deposited yet. Our cashier was sick to-day, and away, and we were short of men in that department, so

that we did not send to the bank at all."

As Lucy almost snatched at the welcome piece of paper, she could not forbear remarking, with a questioning accent: "The furs were to have been charged, you know, to Mrs. Carson's account?"

"Ah, yes," answered the clerk, vague at once and as incomprehensible as a stanza from "Paracelsus." "Ah, yes! Too bad! Some misunderstanding—doubtless trivial. You will be wanting some furs soon, we hope, Mrs. Lord—"

"Not this winter!" cried the thoroughly repentant Lucy, as she whirled and ran back to her cab.

Halloran was at home when she returned. The sudden shock of his Aunt Sallie's pressing need had relegated to the background of his mind, for the time being, the bitter thoughts, the sorrowful intentions, born of last night's quarrel with Lucy. He looked grave and anxious as she entered the studio, but he had not the embarrassed air of a man about to resume ordinary intercourse after a serious quarrel.

"Oh, I'm glad you're back, Lucy," he began. "Aunt Sallie—"

"Yes, I know," interrupted Lucy breathlessly. She crossed the room to where he stood before the fire. Her face was melting with love and soft beauty. He could not understand its expression. But before he had time to ponder at length upon its mystery, she had flung her arms about his neck and had kissed him. "I know. But before you tell me anything else, I want to know how you like my furs."

She drew back from him, holding him at arm's length, and twisting her head backward so that he might have a full view of the little band of squirrel that encircled her neck. At the word "furs," Halloran flushed, and the momentarily forgotten pain returned to him. But it was obvious from her arch, caressing

manner that there was some new meaning in the word.

"Furs?" he repeated stupidly. Then his eyes fastened themselves upon the shabby little band about her neck. "But you've had those all along," he said.

She laughed and returned to the closer shelter of his arms.

"And they're all I'm going to have," she announced triumphantly. "They're all I want—until, maybe, you have sold a picture to Mr. Morgan, and feel that you must give me a set of ermine! Here"—she fumbled in her bag—"here are my furs—and they're not mine. They're for dear old Aunt Sallie!"

She thrust the check into his hands. He stared at it and then at her, and then back at it again.

"But I don't understand," he said.

"Of course you don't, stupid! You don't understand that I've come to my senses, that I'm ashamed of myself and my wicked extravagances, that I mean to lead a godly, righteous, and sober—and most especially parsimonious—life for the remainder of my days! It means that nothing in the world matters except our loving each other, and living and working in peace together. Oh, you're right, you're right! We don't belong with these people I've been running around with. They're not good for us, at least they're not good for me! And I'm going to stop it. Please say you're glad. Please say you're glad, Hal, and that you love me, and that you'll never be cross with me again. And now tell me all about Aunt Sallie!"

But for a few minutes he could not tell her all about Aunt Sallie, for he was much occupied in telling her all about herself, and how hers was the sweetest and most generous nature in the world, and how he was a churl, unworthy of such a treasure. And then he told her all about Aunt Sallie.

As he lay awake that night, with Lucy asleep by his side—Lucy comforted, forgiven, jubilantly happy—he

thought of her with great tenderness and love, with gratitude and admiration, too.

It had been an unexpected source of pride to call up Hans Ritter on the telephone that evening and to say to him, in an offhand manner: "Hans, old man, I shan't need that three hundred, after all. Lucy's had a check come in." That advertisement of Lucy's willingness to share, of Lucy's matter-of-course partnership, had been delicious to his young-husband pride.

Yes, that had been very satisfactory, that proclamation of Lucy's loyalty, of Lucy's outpouring generosity. It had been satisfactory to proclaim, it had been satisfactory to realize. He was a very lucky man, a very happy man. Nevertheless, he would be glad when the time came that he could give in proportion as she gave. He would be glad if they could readjust their way of living, if they could be real workers at a beloved art, not mere hangers-on at rich men's feasts, and paying far too dear for the privilege!

He fell asleep by and by, wondering if, after all, it might not be a good thing for him to see Von Hofman about doing some copying. Von Hofman was always after him; of course, he wouldn't do it for long—just long enough to get a little laid aside, just long enough to pay Lucy back that three hundred she had so lovingly thrust upon him. And he was still too touched by her liberality, too full of rejoicing over their reconciliation and their prospects of a better understanding, to reflect that he would



She called to the servant—had not Mr. Lord come in yet?

have felt no such compulsion upon him had he taken the three hundred dollars from Ritter.

The next morning he saw Von Hofman and found that eminent dealer in a most receptive mood. He had some

originals in stock at that very moment that he wished to have Halloran begin to copy at once. Hal had the sense of signing his soul into bondage as he looked at the Corot, at the Manet, and at the Constable, for copies of which Von Hofman declared that he had Middle Western purchasers already standing rows deep.

He did not tell Lucy what he had done. Somehow, in his own mind, the thing was too grievous a reflection upon their married life to bear mention. He took his share of blame for it manfully. He should have been firm with her. He should have insisted upon some businesslike arrangement in regard to their finances. Well, since he had lacked the courage—or was it the power?—to restrain her; since he had found it impossible to tell her inexorably what she should do with her own money, he supposed the next best thing was for him to do without whimpering, without even remark, the thing he could do.

Von Hofman was instructed, an hour or two after their arrangement had been made, to send the first of the three pictures, well insured, of course, to the Dent girls' studio. They were going West for a two-months' visit home, and they had been delighted, in their kind way, to lend their studio to Hal, "and no questions asked."

CHAPTER IV.

Although the dinner party with which, a few months later, they celebrated the first anniversary of their marriage had been the source of some slight wrangling and disagreement before it occurred, Halloran and Lucy found themselves at the close of the merry evening on happier terms than they had been for weeks. For the bliss of their December reunion had been shattered before the new year was well begun, and the old unspoken war

was begun again between them. Tonight, however, Halloran forgot, or at any rate ignored, the fact that he had wanted to repeat, for a few days at least, the beautiful experience of his honeymoon in the mountains. He forgot that he had regarded Lucy as selfish and unloving because she had insisted upon a dinner and had somewhat particularly and coldly pointed out that she had far too many orders waiting her attention to permit any picknicking out of town.

When the door closed upon the last laughing, congratulatory guest, he turned to his wife with the old light of pleasure in his eyes.

"Lucy, you're a wonter! To get twenty people into this room and to feed them all adequately with only one helper for Maria— You're a wonder!"

Lucy accepted the praise with shining face of satisfaction. She perched upon the arm of the chair in which Halloran had seated himself, and cried eagerly:

"Oh, Hal, they did have a good time, didn't they? And wasn't it wonderful they all amalgamated—the Lounsbury set and the dear Dent girls and funny, stammering, little Fletcher and all the rest of them? It's true, the thing I'm always telling you—that well-placed people are not snobbish. They don't care a rap how you live or what you've got, provided you give them a good time. Major Roderick seemed terribly taken with Fanny Dent, didn't he?"

"Well he might! She's lovely. She's as sweet as wind flowers and all the things that are appearing in the woods this minute."

"Your blessed woods!" Lucy uttered the words in a voice of tender tolerance and indulgence. She ran her slim white fingers through Hal's straight, thick, dark locks. "Well, he shall have his precious country next Sunday. I'll go anywhere you say

within two hours of New York with you. Could I speak you fairer than that?"

Hal caught the teasing hand, and dragged it down from his hair. He kissed each of the pretty white fingers and the rosy palm. He didn't realize, in the joy of this companionship with Lucy, that there was something pathetic in the eagerness and relief with which he clutched at it.

She was still smiling faintly in her pleasure over the success of her little festivity. Hal, watching her with loverlike pride, said lazily: "That's a pretty frock, Luty. When did you get it? I haven't seen it before, have I?"

"No, this is the first time I've worn it. If you hadn't been so rushed, and so grumpy both, when you came in this afternoon, I'd have called your attention to it. I had a little woman make it whom Evangeline Lounsbury recommended to me—awfully good style, lots of smartness, and really very cheap."

"Trust the canny Evangeline to know about the cheap little women!" said Halloran. He had ceased to inquire too closely into his wife's expenditures. "By the way, how much did she give you for the frieze?"

Lucy turned away from him, and began a rather elaborate search for something on the high, carved mantel. She hoped that the blush which she felt mounting to her face was not also crimsoning the back of her neck and shoulders.

"Oh," she answered, with elaborate lightness, "she hasn't paid me anything yet."

"The dickens she hasn't! She's a nice thing in patrons!" Halloran sat up straighter than usual, and spoke with unwonted animation. "Did you make any agreement with her about the price?"

"No," was Lucy's answer as she still continued to search for the object that

had never been upon the mantel. Suddenly she whirled about. "Hal, I can't bear to have a secret from you," she cried suddenly. "Especially to-night." Her shining eyes seemed to set the anniversary of her marriage apart from all common days. She went back to the arm of her husband's chair. "I don't think she has the slightest intention of paying me anything," she told him.

"You — don't — think — she — means—to—pay—you!"

Halloran sat bolt upright, and stared at his wife. "Why, what on earth do you mean? She gave you a perfectly definite order, didn't she? She isn't a common skin, is she?"

"No, not exactly that. But she's like so many rich women, like so many women^s of position," she answered slowly, as if thinking out her creed in regard to the women of society as she spoke. "They think that what they offer, when they offer friendship, association, intimacy, is worth anything the likes of me can pay for it." She made a little grimace as she defined her own position with comic, candid disdain. "I don't suppose they've even reasoned it out—it's just instinctive with them. I suppose it's the likes of me that have fostered the belief in them. You see, Hal, I and the women like me are awfully fond of gayety and of fashion and of the sense of being in the middle of things. We are willing to do a good deal to gratify our little tastes. And so I suppose we are primarily to blame for the attitude of the Evangeline Lounsburys——"

"This is all very pretty," interrupted Halloran, "but let's get down to cases. Why do you think that she doesn't mean to pay you? Or, since you put it that way, that she labors under the delusion she already has paid you by having you at her house and introducing you to her set—her raucous and expensive set, if you want my opinion."

Lucy's color deepened. She didn't look at Halloran as she answered: "Hal, dear, I owed her a bridge debt, and although she didn't say so in so many words, and neither did I, she meant the canceling of that to offset the painting for the nursery."

"You don't mean to tell me that you had lost any real sum of money to her?"

"Not any real sum, according to her standards, but more than I could afford at the moment to pay her. It was the first time we went down there—you know, last fall. And I lost forty dollars."

"Forty dollars!" It was difficult to tell whether Halloran's amazement was directed against his wife for gambling on such a scale or against Mrs. Lounsbury for imagining that so paltry a sum could be regarded as recompense for the work that Lucy had done for her. "Forty dollars! What on earth were you thinking of, Lucy? And does she suppose for an instant that—"

"I don't know what she supposes. And I don't know what got into me. There's only one thing to my credit, Hal, dear."

Her guilt safely confessed, Lucy seemed more at ease again, and burrowed her bright head into Halloran's black broadcloth shoulder. "You'll never catch me paying work for money again; that's one thing certain."

The glow and satisfaction of the earlier evening had departed from Halloran. He lifted Lucy's head gently, and laid it against the cushion. He arose, stretched his long arms upward, gave himself a shake, and answered her last remark with a certain pedagogic formality of manner.

"Then, I suppose, we need not cast the sum wholly into the debtor's side of our accounts. It seems a pity, though, that it should have needed so costly an experiment to show you that

a poor, hard-working woman ought not to play cards for money."

Lucy arose, too, and from her face also the softened beauty of the half hour just past had faded.

"I suppose you have never had to pay for a salutary lesson yourself," she commented hardly. "I think I'll go to bed now. I'm rather tired. Will you sit up for a while longer?"

So delicate are the adjustments between two persons whose mutual love is still a matter of miracle, not of placid, everyday comradeship that each one of them felt the other guilty of having destroyed a golden moment.

"Yes, I think I'll stay up and read a while," he answered coldly.

"It's very fortunate that I understand Hal," Lucy reflected magnanimously as she lay in her bed that night, wishing that, after all, he might get over his tantrums and come up to her with words of affection and pleas for forgiveness in his looks. "Very fortunate, indeed. I dare say some people think him merely lazy."

But as soon as she had formulated the disloyal thought—disloyal even though she denied that it was her own thought and ascribed it to the baser minds of others—she was revolted by herself. She knew how hard, how conscientiously he worked, with what high hopes and intentions, and with what great talent. She was ashamed of herself. And being ashamed, and, in the main a sincere and warm-hearted young person, she jumped to her feet and ran to the gallery rail.

"Hal! Oh, Hal!" she called softly.

He looked up from his chair by the table. All the room below her was in darkness except that little spot of light where he sat reading. Perhaps it was the surrounding darkness that made her think him very pale. At any rate, she did think him that, and the thought awoke fresh remorse in her.

"Come up and beat me, Hal!" she

cried, half laughing, half tearful. "I'm a pig! I'm a beast! I'm a wretch!"

Hal came up two steps at a time, but not to avail himself of her permission to beat her. Instead, he caught her in his arms, covered the curly head and soft face with kisses, and told her that she was the dearest, the best, the most gifted, the most altogether wonderful person who had ever linked her life to a stupid, plodding man's. And thus the April day of their wedding anniversary closed.

CHAPTER V.

A taxi had just drawn up before the studio building when Hal approached the door, after having put Fanny Dent upon her street car at the corner. He was feeling rather annoyed with Lucy. She had gone out to luncheon—a strictly business luncheon, she declared—with her admiring editor, John Enwright, and the head of his art department. She was to have been home at four o'clock to receive Fanny Dent and the attentive Major Roderick. The major, as it happened, had telephoned in from some outlying country district at three o'clock that a local wreck was blocking his passage to town, but Fanny had appeared in due course and had waited patiently for the return of her errant hostess.

Halloran had rather liked, at first, to be alone with the gentle girl and to hear her praise of the East River picture upon which he was at work. He had always liked Fanny, with her unworldliness, her poetical personality, her shyness, her sweetness. He was in the mood, being surfeited with much society of another sort, to appreciate her more than ever. But he could not abandon himself to the restful influence of her presence as long as he was waiting for Lucy's reappearance. It annoyed him that she should treat the girl cavalierly.

When half past five had struck and the delinquent hostess had not appeared, Fanny had arisen and had said that she must go. Maria, of course, had attended quite adequately to the material tea-time wants of the guest, but Hal felt that Lucy had been lacking in courtesy.

"If it had been one of that precious Cove set," he kept thinking to himself, "she would have been home on time—home with fresh little cakes and a lot of flowers and all sorts of things. As if Fanny weren't worth the whole bunch of them!"

But aloud he had said, properly anxious, but not accusatory: "This is the worst of having your wife make a success. Half the magazines in the country are after her, and Enwright has to fight hard to keep the 'Bosky Babes' for his own. He wanted her to make some sort of a contract with him for two or three years, and I suppose that's what kept her. She'll be awfully sorry to have missed you."

"I am sorry not to see her, but of course it doesn't matter, and of course I understand," Fanny had answered. "Give her my love, and tell her I'll call her up to-morrow. You don't need to come to the car with me—how ridiculous! As if Cornelia and I weren't in the habit of going all over New York at any hour of the day or night, and it's not really dark yet."

Nevertheless, Halloran had insisted, partly from a desire to make up for Lucy's casual treatment by excessive courtesy on his part, and partly because it never seemed to him quite appropriate for Fanny Dent to be drifting about the city unprotected. She was the old-fashioned sort of girl, he used to tell himself, and it was inharmonious to have her doing the things that the new-fashioned girls had made possible. So they had walked a block or two together, and in the friendly dusk he had heard something which troubled



"Come in, Mr. Enwright, do!" cried Lucy fervently. "I'm going to receive a perfectly terrible scolding, I can see that, if you don't come."

her kind heart. Then, returning to the studio building, he met Lucy descending from the taxi, with Mr. Enwright in attendance.

"Hello, Lord! How are you, my dear fellow?" Enwright saluted him with the greatest cordiality.

"Oh, hello, Hal! I forgot all about Fanny until ten minutes ago," confessed Lucy. She was remarkably pretty and animated, her face aglow with health and happiness and some inner delight.

"She's just gone," he informed her. He had made as curt a rejoinder to Enwright's effusive greeting as was possible.

"Come in, Mr. Enwright, do!" cried Lucy fervently. "I'm going to receive a perfectly terrible scolding, I can see that, if you don't come. He may forget about my cripes if he's hindered long enough from recounting them."

"Do come in, won't you?" But there was no warmth in Lord's seconding of his wife's invitation. The astute and

tactful Enwright declined the invitations without seeming to observe the different spirits in which they were given. He told them good-by, sprang back into the taxi, and was off, while the Lords turned and walked into the cathedrallike hall of the old studio building. Lucy, aggrieved at being tacitly taken to task, as well as anxious to pick flaws in her husband because of her own consciousness of guilt in regard to Fanny Dent, amused herself by contrasting the gait of the two men, their clothes, their whole appearance.

"Really, Hal, it's disgraceful of you not to get some new clothes," she informed him when they had reached the privacy of their own dwelling. "That suit's threadbare."

"I have no intention of getting a new one, however," replied Halloran shortly.

"Why not?" inquired Lucy, drawing off her long doeskin gloves. "You owe it to yourself—indeed, if you come to that, I think you owe it to me—to look well dressed and prosperous."

"I owe too many other things to one person or another," replied Halloran bitterly, "to be greatly concerned with what I am owing myself. I can't afford any new clothes this spring, and I have no intention of getting any."

Lucy turned and looked at him reproachfully. However gravely, however flagrantly she had broken the good resolutions she had made upon the night when her furs were discarded to pay for Aunt Sallie's appendicitis operation, she did not reproach herself greatly with her lapses. She felt almost as if she had stored up enough virtue in that one act of renunciation to justify a good deal of minor self-indulgence. Or, more truthfully speaking, she had really thought very little about it. She had the blood of the spendthrift in her veins—that was the truth of the matter. That she happened to have in them also the blood of a

talented woman, capable of earning at least a great part of what she spent, was accidental.

"It's very foolish of you to talk in that way, Hal," she said, with the air of a very logical and reasonable person. "I've been doing awfully well lately."

"You mean you've been getting lots of orders," Halloran corrected her. "Of course you're too good an artist not to know that you've not been doing well—you've been doing blamed poor work."

"I don't think it becomes you to tell me that," Lucy flashed back at him.

"Doubtless you're right. I seem to have put myself in a situation where it doesn't become me to speak the truth very often—" He passed his hand wearily across his forehead. "Don't let's quarrel, Lucy. I don't mean to be a bear. I know you work hard—I only wish you wouldn't! But—I heard something to-day that has upset me even more than your failure to come back to keep your engagement with little Fanny."

"What did you hear?" Lucy's manner was scarcely conciliatory.

"I heard that in that crowd you've been running with since we were married, they've begun to talk about you and John Enwright."

"And where did you hear that?" asked Lucy, with great gentleness of manner—a gentleness so entirely unnatural that it should have warned him of impending danger. But it did not.

"I heard it from one of the truest friends you have," he replied earnestly. "I heard it from a girl who adores you, who thinks you the most wonderful and perfect of women."

"It was the act of a friend," said Lucy, "to run to one's husband with nasty gossip like that. And I suppose it was quite the act of a husband"—her sneer became more pronounced—"to listen to the friend."

"Fanny Dent told me, honestly, only because she thought you should know in order that you might regulate your conduct accordingly. I need scarcely remind you that she didn't come here to see me, but that she had an appointment with you. It came about quite naturally that she told me what people were saying. Of course, she doesn't take any stock in it, any more than I do. But I don't think you ought to keep on in a way that gives people a chance to talk."

Lucy seated herself slowly. Her face was quite pale, and its pretty features looked, for an instant, pinched and old. She smiled a harsh, unyouthful smile.

"It's a curious coincidence," she said, "that I should have learned something about you, too, to-day. The only difference is that I heard what seems to be a fact, whereas you heard only the report of some vulgar gossip, some cheap innuendo."

"What on earth have you heard about me?" inquired Halloran, with quite manifest surprise.

"Merely that you do the main part of your work in the Dent girls' studio," replied Lucy. She looked at him with the same disagreeable smile her face had worn since she had seated herself. Halloran flushed.

"It's absolutely false!" he began.

"Perhaps I made a mistake to say that you do the greater part of your work there," Lucy corrected herself carefully. "Perhaps I should only have said that you are reported to spend the greater part of your working time there."

"Lucy!" he blazed wrathfully.

"I repeat only what I have heard," she answered. "Are you going to deny that you work in Fanny Dent's studio—in the studio of that dear friend of mine who improves the shining hours of my absence by trying to sow seeds of suspicion in your mind?"

"Stop!" he thundered. "This is becoming indecent. I'll tell you all about the studio business. I did work in the Dent girls' studio while they were back home in Ohio for Christmas and the six weeks after. Since then I've been working in Fletcher's place in the same building."

"And why on earth are you working at other people's studios?" inquired Lucy, in honest astonishment that robbed her voice of its ugly, cutting edge.

"Because I've been doing something I didn't want you to know about. And because it's next to impossible to do any consecutive work in this place as you've reconstructed it. This is the sort of studio that ribbon clerks dream of—all pink teas and chafing-dish suppers! A man can't work here—"

"A woman can and does," she reminded him bitterly.

Again the color overspread his face to the very roots of his hair.

"Thank you for reminding me again of that. The woman is doing extremely poor work, as she is possibly perfectly well aware. But that's neither here nor there. I got out of here because, as I tell you, I was doing something I didn't want you to know about. I wanted to earn a little money to match that which you are always throwing in my teeth—"

She started to her feet, her eyes hard and brilliant with wrath, with injury.

"Oh, how dare you! How can you!" she cried.

"How can I? How dare I? I don't dare go on any longer without facing the truth. When you lent me that accursed money in December—"

"I never lent you any money. When I have money, it's yours as much as mine. When you have money, it's mine as much as yours—that's the way we said it should be—and that's the way I've tried to make it. I've never accused you—not in the remotest depths

of my mind—of being to blame for making less than I have. I've always admitted it was because I happened to strike a popular vein. But I won't be talked to like this. You're trying to blame me for everything—you who have been deceiving me in some stupid, silly way."

For a minute her outbreak silenced him, but only for a minute.

"You've got to hear me out," he said stubbornly. "When you lent me that money for Aunt Sallie just before Christmas, some remnant of common sense within me made me realize that I'd better get ready to pay it back. Oh, I'm not denying that you were sweet and generous—you seemed to me the sweetest, the most generous thing in the world that night! But some little remnant of common sense, as I said, made me realize that it was only one of your pretty moods, your adorable, lovable moods. And I wanted to get ready to pay you back.

"I didn't want you to know what I was doing, because I knew you would protest and would make promises you couldn't keep. So I went to Von Hofman the next morning—he's always been after me to keep on with copying—and I got some commissions. And I borrowed the Dent girls' studio, as I have told you. And when they came back, I moved my traps over into Fletcher's place—not because I should have dreamed for a minute that you could harbor any vulgar suspicions of your husband and your best friends, but simply because I should have been in their way.

"That's all—except this—" He looked at her with a vindictive narrowing of his eyes. He pounded with his fist upon the table. He seemed, in the violence of his anger, utterly changed from the man she knew and loved. "Except this—that I've got the money to pay you back, at least what you spent on Aunt Sallie. And that I shall

keep on working until I've made enough to pay you back for every penny you've expended in excess of what I've expended on our life together. And that I'm done, done with the whole business, done with the whole experiment. It's been a failure. I don't say it's your fault, and I won't say it's mine. But it's been a failure and I'm done with it."

That time when she heard the door in the corridor close, she knew that it was indeed an irrevocable closing. She realized it as one realizes death—with-out reasoning about it, without understanding the cause for it or the changes it entails; only perceiving, rather dully, rather emotionlessly, the great fact. She did not tell herself then, as she did in the weeks and months that followed, that he, for all his gentler manner, all his apparently less impulsive, more philosophical habit of mind, was, in the last analysis, a creature of moods even as she was. She only knew that he had gone, that he had meant what he had said, that he had called their marriage a failure, and had declared himself done with it.

She sat there, feeling curiously dull and indifferent for a long time. To Maria, coming with tender solicitude about her dinner, she said that she was not hungry. By and by she allowed the old woman to light the lamps. She was not thinking, she was not suffering particularly. She was simply sitting, a little stunned, very indifferent, waiting for the lethargy of shock to pass and the realization of the situation to come home to her. But when her worried servitor came to her at midnight and begged her to go up to her room, she seemed no nearer a realization of the situation than she had been during all the hours she had sat there. Nevertheless, she submitted to being led upstairs, to being undressed and put to bed. It surprised her very much the next morning to realize that she had

fallen asleep and had slept comfortably through the night.

CHAPTER VI.

One afternoon, about six months after the Lords had separated, Lucy was one of little group of people taking tea upon the porch of an inn in Surrey, named, like so many inns, "The Cat and the Fiddle."

In the road outside the brick-walled garden, a big touring car stood at rest, the chauffeur tinkering, mechanicwise, with parts of its internal organism. It was obviously from that car that the party discussing tea and bread and butter on the piazza had been unloaded. Two of the three men in the group were contradicting each other about the length of their day's run; all of the women were swathed in veils and dust coats. The third man, who happened to be John Enwright, was devoting himself with great assiduity to the needs of the ladies, especially to those of Mrs. Lord. From time to time he would throw a conversational contribution toward the discussion between his brother-in-law and Horace Marsden, said contribution being always neatly designed to fan the flame of argument still higher.

Lucy was looking tired. Her face had lost something of the gay animation that used to characterize it. In repose it was not only a little weary, but ever so faintly sad. It was paler, too, than of old. It was this overstrained look of hers that caused Evangeline Lounsbury, her hostess, to say to her:

"It's ridiculous for you to talk of staying in London to work while we go on to France, Lucy, dear. You need the rest and change more than any of us."

"Evangeline," cried Lucy in mock despair, "when can I persuade you to believe that I am a working woman? Tell

her"—she turned to John Enwright, smiling—"that editors are a cruel and marble-hearted race who will have their orders filled on time or know the reason why."

"But you can do so much better work and so much faster work," urged Mrs. Lounsbury, practiced in sophistry, "if you're rested. Can't she, Dora?" She turned to Mrs. Entwistle, the third woman of the party, a pale, dark-haired, dark-eyed widow of thirty-six or seven. But Mrs. Entwistle, although her gaze was seldom direct, saw a good deal from behind her long veil and dark lashes. Some of the things she had seen during the three weeks the party had been together had made her feel quite willing to have Lucy leave them as soon as she pleased.

"Why appeal to me?" she drawled lazily. "I never did a stroke of useful work in my life. I'm quite ignorant of the exactions of an artist's calling. I should feel awfully guilty if, among us, we persuaded Mrs. Lord to do anything she thought ill advised."

A ghost of her old, mocking smile sparkled in Lucy's eyes for a second, and dented the corners of her lips.

"Thank you, Mrs. Entwistle," she said. "You're a true friend to the laboring classes."

"John, you're one of these terrible ogres of editors she pretends to be afraid of—you persuade her that it's all nonsense, her slaving herself to death in this way."

"Oh, I'm a selfish beast, and as I expect to be in London myself for a week or two, corralling the masters of English literature for the pages of *Hearth and Heart*, I should be only too glad if Mrs. Lord decided not to go to France yet."

Lucy looked her astonishment, and Dora Entwistle laughed her appreciation. Even Enwright's sister seemed a little astounded. But she rallied.

"To be sure," she said fervently after

a second, "I remember now you did say something about joining us later in France." And she no longer urged Lucy to continue on the holiday tour.

It was Dora Entwistle's suggestion, by and by, that they should spend the night in this pretty, embowered inn in the Surrey downs. They were all tired, she pointed out, and she had a premonition that they should hear a belated nightingale if they stayed in the country that night. As for the mail and the American papers, which the gentlemen professed a great desire to obtain, she pointed out that with London only twenty miles away it would be easy enough to send the car up to the hotel and have it back before bedtime. And, as they all were rather tired, her suggestion was adopted after a little talk.

Lucy's lavender-scented little room, white-curtained and sweet, communicated by a door with Evangeline Lounsbury's. That lady suggested that the door be kept open for the sake of air. As the two women removed the dust of travel from their faces and hair, they talked back and forth to each other, and finally Evangeline, brush in hand, entered Lucy's room.

"You and Dora Entwistle aren't very fond of each other, are you?" she demanded briskly.

Lucy looked at her with lifted eyebrows. The effect of hauteur was somewhat marred by the cold cream with which she had besmeared her face.

"Oh, I don't know," she answered lightly. "I haven't considered my feelings for her very deeply. She's all right enough, I dare say."

"Talk about damning with faint praise!" laughed Evangeline. "But you don't like each other—that's plain to be seen. Well, I don't suppose two women who are interested in the same man ever do like each other, any more than two men who are interested in the same woman——"

"Evangeline, you're both disgusting and absurd!" stated Lucy firmly, borrowing a leaf from Mrs. Lounsbury's own volume of frankness.

"Disgusting, maybe, but not absurd," declared Mrs. Lounsbury, with equal firmness. "Dora would have been glad to marry Johnnie any time these five years past——"

"And I, how long?" asked Lucy, laughing, but redder than even the cold-cream rubbing made natural.

"Oh, I don't say that you would at all," sighed Evangeline. "I only wish I could think you did love him—he's so crazy about you. I'm awfully fond of John, as you probably know. He's my greatest weakness. I want him—what is it that horrid advertisement says?—I want him to have what he wants when he wants it. And he so palpably wants you, Lucy, dear——"

"Evangeline," interrupted Lucy, "do observe a few of the decencies. You seem to forget that even if what you say about your brother were true, I'm not free."

"But you will be," asserted Mrs. Lounsbury calmly. "A pretty, gay, alive woman like you isn't going to keep on in this anomalous position. You'll go out to Reno next winter——"

"Please!" cried Lucy.

"My dear, don't be a refined sentimental. You've left your husband, haven't you, or he's left you? Anyhow, you're living apart from him. I suppose you've no intention of making it up with him—I'm sure I hope you haven't, and that's quite apart from Johnnie. You will let me say, Lucy, that he was no fit match for you, that excellent Mr. Halloran Lord. He may be a good painter—I don't know anything about that"—superbly she dismissed art as a trifle—"and I have no doubt he was a kind, worthy young man. But he didn't know the definition of a good time, he was entirely unacquainted with the spelling of suc-

cess, and I can see nothing in the world more humdrum and deadly than the life his wife would have to lead. He was no fit mate for you. Why, you, with your good looks and your love of fun and your talent—you can go anywhere! Believe me, Lucy, dear, it was a good thing you two found out your utter incompatibility before there were too many complications—children and all that."

Lucy, her face freed at last of its greasy mask, seated herself opposite her candid friend. There was rather a hard glitter in her gray eyes. She spoke with a conciseness equal to the other woman's.

"So that's the way it seems to you, is it? Shall I tell you how it seems to me sometimes—generally about three o'clock in the morning, I admit, when things are apt to look pretty gloomy anyhow? It seems to me then that I've been a fool, a pitiful, ignorant fool. I had a talent out of which I might have made something worth while—not merely money. I've chosen to overwork the poor thing for the sake of money, to keep myself dressed like you women, and to surround myself with the pretty, petty luxuries you all have. I think I've been as absurd as the Indians who exchanged their forests and their furs for strings of colored beads or bottles of rum. I've liked to do the things you women do because, as you say, I'm alive and gay. Anything that wears the look of pleasure beckons me. But do you know what I've found out? I've found out that you people make a business, a work, of merriment. It's your career. Well, one can't be an artist and live with you on your terms—Halloran knew that instinctively. It's taken me months to learn it for myself. That's the way things look to me."

"Does all this point to a reconciliation?" Mrs. Lounsbury's manner was slightly contemptuous.

"No. I have no desire for a reconciliation and I don't suppose he has. I dare say we weren't really in love with each other. It's certain enough that we were really incompatible. I'm only trying to tell you that I see him now as a good deal more reasonable than I did a while ago. Now run along into your own room and get dressed. It must be nearly dinner time. Don't be annoyed with me for anything I said—it's you who have taught me to speak out from the shoulder." She pushed her friend toward the door with a rather tired smile.

"But how about my brother?" demanded Evangeline Lounsbury.

Lucy laughed.

"For a perfectly sensible, hard-as-nails woman you have a funny sentimental streak in you somewhere," she said. "Mr. Enwright is about as much interested in me emotionally as—as—" She broke off with a half-embarrassed laugh.

"I don't wonder that you are stumped to find the comparison you want," said Evangeline dryly. "Now don't try to play the innocent as far as John is concerned. You're experienced enough to know when a man's in love with you, and you do know it about him."

"I know nothing of the sort." Lucy's voice was serious now and rather indignant. "And I consider it extremely trying of you to make me feel conscious about him. He's my good friend, I hope, and I know he's my good editor. And that's all."

Nevertheless, after Evangeline, with a little face of protest and disbelief, had gone out of the room and the door was closed upon her, Lucy's eyes were troubled and her movements were the slow, vague ones of a person whose mind is not upon what he is doing.

After all, why not? The six months had passed without the least overture toward reconciliation from Halloran. The first week after his stormy depar-



"I think, if you don't mind," she said unevenly, rising from her chair, "that I'll go up to my room for a little while."

ture from the studio had not been lacking in reminders of him. The first day he had sent some one for his clothes. Before that Lucy, already in

a blaze of outraged feeling, had been mentally putting all the blame for the situation upon him. After that there had been no words in the English lan-

guage strong enough to characterize her rage. She had packed her own belongings with incredible speed, and before nightfall she had been out of the house also. As Fanny Dent had been concerned with the quarrel, she had not done what she would have done under normal circumstances—that is, gone at once to the Dent girls' studio. Instead, she had gone to a hotel.

There, for forty-eight hours, she had occupied herself largely in recounting to herself her own wrongs. She had recalled how she and Halloran had planned a marriage not only of love, but of equal comradeship, of equal responsibility; she had recalled the pride and joy she had taken in the thought of her independence, in the thought that she need never be a drag upon his talent, need never force him to put his Pegasus to plow.

And how nobly, so she had said to herself, she had lived up to her understanding of their agreement! How hard she had worked, how freely she had spent upon their joint abode, their joint pleasures! If she had established their living upon a prettier and a more expensive footing than he would have, at any rate she had paid the price of the prettiness and the expense! If she had been a somewhat slovenly manager of finances, if she had run into debt, if the foot of the dun had been frequent in their corridors, at any rate it had been by her work, her popularity, her generosity, if one came to that, that complications had been smoothed out and that creditors had departed placated.

Oh, he had treated her shamefully, shamefully! He was dull, he was heartless, he was indifferent, he was languid! And to think that after all she had done for him, after the way in which she had widened his circle, had borne him on the sheer current of her charm and popularity among people who would never have discovered

him or cared about him, he should have dared to listen to Fanny Dent's strictures on her conduct!

And then her anger had shifted to Fanny—to Fanny, the old-fashioned, poetic, clinging-ivy ideal of man. Lucy had always been fond of her in rather a big-sister, patronizing, protective way; now she beheld her as a treacherous little cat. In fact, every thought that wounded affection, jealousy, vanity, and all the less philosophic human emotions had been capable of rousing in her she had felt, during those two or three days that she had stayed at the hotel.

She had sent word to the post office to forward her mail to her temporary address. By this device she had escaped leaving with the studio superintendent an address that she had feared Halloran might want, at the same time not cutting herself off from all communication with her kind. The first letter she had received had been evidence enough that Halloran was not seeking her; it had been from him. It had been dated from another hotel, and it had contained a check for three hundred dollars, which he had stated was in payment for the money she had advanced for his Aunt Sallie's operation. Furious, she had torn it into a hundred pieces, inclosed them in a fresh envelope, and redirected it to him. Two days later she had learned from a newspaper that he and Hans Ritter had sailed together on the deferred trip to Antwerp. Then it was that she had realized that he was not going to seek a reconciliation, and the realization had been like a dash of cold water upon the hot tumult of her anger.

She had drifted through the summer anyhow. She had accepted a good many invitations down to Lounsbury Cove and to other country houses which her acquaintance with the Lounsburys had opened up to her. At first she had merely said that Halloran was away

on an artistic excursion with his old friend; but when, in June, she had received a letter from him again inclosing the check and coldly stating his determination that she should use it, breathing no syllable of regret or of yearning, she had confided the true state of the case—or what she had been inclined to pass for the true state of the case—to Evangeline Lounsbury.

Evangeline, belonging to the set in which divorces are a commonplace, had been frankly relieved to think that she need never again invite Halloran Lord to her house.

"Awfully worthy and all that, my dear," she had said, "I don't doubt, but he didn't fit in. You'll be glad yourself by and by."

And with a certain sort of cynical kindness she had done what she could to make the younger woman glad at once, inviting her more and more to the Cove, introducing her to more and more people of her own idle, worldly class.

Meantime, Lucy had rented another little studio in town and had moved enough furniture from the old one to equip it. There she had worked in the feverish intervals of her feverish playing with the Lounsburys and their friends. This trip to England in September had been the culmination of the summer's amusement.

Well, she thought, as she reviewed the situation for the ten-thousandth time, why not John Enwright? It was, her own common sense told her as clearly as Evangeline Lounsbury's unhesitating speech, a foregone conclusion that she should marry again. She was not the type of woman to live a cloistered existence. She was, as her friend had told her, young, alive, greedy of life. Of course, this unnatural situation would have to end. The separation between her and Halloran would have to be made formal and complete. And after that, of course, she would marry again some time, some one.

Why not John Enwright? He was more than personable; he was a member of one of the old New York families; he could take her among the people whom, a year ago, she had longed to know. She found him congenial, at any rate in superficial matters. He liked the gay world chiefly because he knew no other; she liked it by affinity. He had no great amount of money, to be sure, but that defect he was remedying, according to his sister's optimistic reports.

Why not John Enwright? Of course Lucy knew that he liked and admired her—more than liked, more than admired her. She had been conscious of it on the very afternoon when Halloran had told her that people were beginning to talk about her connection with the young man—it had been her consciousness of it that had made it particularly hard to bear the charge.

They were rather a cheerful party at dinner. Horace Marsden and Mr. Lounsbury had finally settled to their satisfaction what the day's run had been. Mrs. Entwistle seemed in somewhat better humor than at tea time. John Enwright was what he always was—all things to all men, and especially to all women; flattering, but with too light a touch ever to be offensive, witty, but with too careless^{*} an air ever to arouse anger or the spirit of competition that wit sometimes arouses, well informed, but not pedagogic. Yes, distinctly he was a very agreeable type of man. But, admitting this, watching him with a new speculation in her glance, Lucy felt a little weariness at heart.

"Will you take a turn in the garden?" John Enwright asked Lucy when they had finished their coffee. There was something a little abrupt in his usually suave and debonair manner; there was something a little insistent and compelling in his usually light glance. Lucy's heart performed a somersault,

Could it be that Evangeline had already suggested to him what she had suggested to her, Lucy, that afternoon? Or had some yet more primitive, yet more subtle, agency been at work between them?

As she went out into the dewy, sweet garden with him, her unruly memory insisted upon recalling that day two years before when she had had another proposal. She saw Halloran's kind, plain, homely face break into a sudden look of understanding and of love. She felt his eyes upon her, she felt her hands caught in his. In that breathless, tumultuous moment, there had been no time for deliberation. She had promised herself to him before a word had been spoken. It had required no balancing of reasons, no arguments pro and con, that acceptance! He had not questioned whether she would suit him, she had not asked anything concerning their compatibility, their means; they had simply been caught up into the golden moment, and when they had emerged from it, they had been plighted. Well, she told herself firmly, her experience had shown that it was not thus happy marriages were made!

"I don't want to seem intrusive, Lucy," said John Enwright, leading her down a path all scented with mignonette, "but I find it would add greatly to my peace of mind to know if you have heard from Lord lately."

"No," answered Lucy.

"Here is another question, more intrusive yet—have you wanted to hear from him?"

This time denial did not come so promptly. But it came finally.

"No," said Lucy slowly, "I'm sure that I have not wanted to."

John breathed a gusty sigh of relief. "Thank you," he said. "That takes a load from my mind." There was a pause. They had walked to the end of the little garden, where, beside a brick wall against which apricots and

peaches were spread to grow, English fashion, there was a garden bench. A much more beautiful setting for a love scene, Lucy thought to herself, than the disordered studio where love or young desire had caught her and Halloran!

"Let's sit down for a minute and watch the moon," suggested John. "You never suspected that I had undeveloped possibilities as a poet, did you? I have. 'How sweet the moonlight sleeps'—and all that, you know."

Then he fell silent again. Lucy was strangely at a loss for words. She seemed unable to decide whether or not she wished to stem the tide she knew was flowing in her direction.

"You and I seem to hit it off pretty well together, don't we, marquise?" said John, suddenly dropping Shakespeare and speaking in his more familiar manner, using one of the many nicknames which Lucy had acquired in the Cove set. He took her hand as he spoke. It lay somewhat inertly in his own.

"I suppose we do," replied Lucy.

"Lucy, of course you know I am in love with you. I suppose I have been, almost from the first, though I declare I had no gay-Lothario intentions as long as I thought you and Lord were getting along well together. I never aspired to be a breaker up of happy homes. But now that, without any assistance from me, the happy home is broken up, I feel I have the right to speak to you. Don't you think we would be pretty comfortable together?"

"Pretty comfortable—yes, I suppose we should," said Lucy.

"Of course, when I said 'pretty comfortable,' I meant ecstatically happy," John explained, with a laugh. "I'm not altogether pleased with your placid acceptance of the phrase. Don't you think we would be riotously happy together?" He spoke in his familiar manner of badinage, and Lucy accorded it the tribute of a faint smile in the moonlight.

"It wouldn't be fair to you for me to pretend that," she answered. "I don't think I have many expectations of riotous happiness left. I—I feel somehow too tired—"

"I don't care what you call it," he cried eagerly. "By one name or another, it would be what I long for. Lucy, won't you straighten this affair out—this wretched, half-and-half state with Lord—and marry me?"

Well, why not? The question repeated itself somewhat drearily in Lucy's mind.

"It's good of you to want me," she said, with a sudden rush of self-pity, and, in the midst of it, a little gratitude toward him. "I'm not rich; I'm not of your set—I don't see why you want me—"

"Because I'm in love with you," interrupted John vigorously.

"Well, then," assented Lucy mistily. And there in the moonlight-scented, stiff, little English garden he put his arms about her and kissed her.

Outside the brick wall the big car, sent up to London for the letters, blew a noisy blast announcing its return. The moment of sentiment past, Mr. Enwright was again the man of affairs.

"There's the mail," he said. "Let's go in and see what we draw."

"We won't say anything about this," said Lucy nervously, "until—until it would be proper!" she ended, with a half-shy, half-shamed laugh.

"You mean we won't announce our engagement until after you and Lord have placed your affairs on a recognizable footing? Of course not—except to Evangeline. I'd like her to know, if you don't mind. She's keen for the match, you know—she's always keen for anything that she believes my heart is set on."

"Well, not even Evangeline to-night," begged Lucy.

She found herself in a sort of panic. He pressed her hand reassuringly.

"Not until you give the word, dear girl," he assured her.

There were no letters for Lucy, merely a few much-traveled bills which she turned face downward without opening. While the others were busy with their letters, she began glancing through the American papers. Suddenly she gave a little cry. All of them looked up. She was staring at the headlines of a week-old New York paper.

"What is it?" asked Mr. Lounsbury, visions of stock-market collapses mysteriously withheld from him flashing across his mind.

"What is it?" demanded Evangeline and Dora Entwistle together, wondering what scandal among which of their acquaintances had reached its climax in publicity. John Enwright walked around the table and took the paper from her hand.

"What is it?" he asked.

Lucy pointed to the head of the column at which she had been staring. In bold black type he read: "Halloran Lord accused of complicity in the Von Hofman-Diederich art swindle."

"Sit down!" he said to Lucy, and pushed a chair forward for her.

"It isn't so!" cried Lucy defensively.

"Whatever it is, I know it isn't so, if it accuses Lord of anything under-handed," replied John Enwright promptly.

There was a babel of questions all around them. "Accuses Lord!" they all repeated.

"You'll have to wait a few minutes till I get at the gist of this matter," replied Enwright, reading rapidly down the column. "It's some American art news that we've missed. Ah, I begin to get it. Yes—here it is—William Diederich—reputation in Toledo as a wealthy art connoisseur—gifts to the art gallery of his native city—gifts to

the Washington Art Gallery—— Ah, yes! I see. A Middle Western Mæcenas who has just made the discovery that the old masters and the new masters with which he has been adorning art galleries here and there are mostly clever frauds. The discovery was made”—he read along, making a running abstract of the paragraphs —“the discovery was made about six weeks ago that a Gainsborough that he had given the Toledo gallery was of the vintage of 1905. He had obtained it from Von Hofman, of New York. It was one of those omniscient art critics of Germany who made the discovery and who proved it, in spite of Diederich's loud outcry. Then, his suspicions once aroused, he had the expert examine everything he had ever bought from Von Hofman. Exceedingly clever forgeries, almost all of them. He is suing Von Hofman for a million and a half dollars; he has withdrawn his gifts from the various galleries; and he is making a devil of a row all over the lot.”

“But Halloran?” faltered Lucy.

“I'm coming to that. It seems Von Hofman has implicated him; has declared that he bought the pictures from Lord in good faith as originals——”

“Why, how on earth would poor Hal have the money to be buying old masters?” inquired Lucy furiously. Her eyes were brilliant, her color was high, her slim figure was tense with anger.

“Exactly. Von Hofman is merely trying to raise a cloud of dust so as to obscure his own part in this.”

“But it's too absurd!”

“Of course, it's too absurd—only nothing ever seems too absurd to a rogue caught in his roguery,” agreed John. He had cast one rather searching look at Lucy's transfigured face. “Oh, I see how he tries to make this absurdity sound plausible. He says that Lord acted as his agent in the purchase of pictures abroad, and then

palmed off on him the copies that he, in good faith, sold to Diederich. A pretty fishy story! He won't get any one to believe it. He'll have to shut up shop.”

“But Halloran—what does Halloran say?” cried Lucy.

“Oh, he admits making copies for Von Hofman, but says he had no idea that they were being sold as anything but copies. He has recognized as his work three of Diederich's latest purchases—a Constable, a Manet, and a Corot. He says he made these at Von Hofman's order, and that he received a hundred dollars apiece for them. Von Hofman, good business man, sold them to Diederich for a total of thirty-five thousand dollars. Very fair profit that.”

The angry color was receding from Lucy's face now. She knew how Halloran would be cut to the quick by this aspersion upon his integrity, no matter how absurd. She knew how he had hated the copying, and she realized that this last work had been undertaken in order that he might establish himself upon a better footing with her. She knew his sensitiveness, an almost morbid sensitiveness! She saw his energies paralyzed, his pride crushed. It seemed to her that she would die if she could not hear him say that he forgave her for having forced him to this extremity.

“I think, if you don't mind,” she said unevenly, rising from her chair, “that I'll go to my room for a little while. May I take the paper with me?”

“Of course you may,” replied John heartily. “But I've really given you all the leading points in the story.”

“I'm coming with you, Lucy, dear,” declared Evangeline.

“No, please don't!” insisted Lucy. Then she smiled with an effort to reassure them. “I'll be down again very soon. I'm not going to swoon or have

hysterics or anything." She went out of the room, the paper in her hand.

The instant her trembling fingers had found the matches and had succeeded in lighting the candles on the table, she smoothed out the crumpled sheet, and her eyes raced down it, looking for Halloran's address. At last she had it. "Mr. Lord, when interviewed by a reporter for the *Times* at his studio in the Rubens last night, said—"

"Ah!" Lucy's heart was stabbed as she breathed the exclamation. So he was in the same building with the Dent girls!

She sat for half an hour, trying to think how the situation between her and Halloran was altered by this stale column of news. Nothing was really different; and yet she felt that the face of the world was changed. She felt that she must go back, must be with him, if he would receive her, to share whatever obloquy should fall upon him, to give him whatever comfort the assurance of her love and belief could give.

Love—that was the curious thing that she felt, after all these months of torpor! Love—that ached to share hardship, that burned to defend, that longed to heal all wounds! Love, the very core of which was the passion to serve, to spend itself! Her whole soul felt remade by this sudden baptism of grief and pity.

It even seemed to her, as she sat there yearning to annihilate the space between herself and her husband, that his feelings in the matter were of slight importance. Suppose he was still angry with her? Suppose he was still so deeply and despairingly convinced of her shallowness, of her hardness, of her triviality, that he wished to keep her forever out of his life? Suppose he had found that poor, pale, adoring, little Fanny was more nearly his ideal than she, Lucy, with her caprices, her

materialism, her low ideals? Even that, she felt, did not matter. She had discovered that she loved Halloran. Whether or not he loved her was something apart from the issue in her soul.

By and by, drawing a deep breath, she rang a bell. From the region below there ascended the pink-cheeked maid who had served them their tea upon the porch that afternoon.

"Have you a paper with steamer sailings advertised?" she asked the girl. "Will you please bring it to me? And how late is the telegraph station open here at night? It closes at nine? But one can telephone a telegram or cable message into Guilford at any time of the night? Thank you. After you have brought me the paper I shall want to telephone."

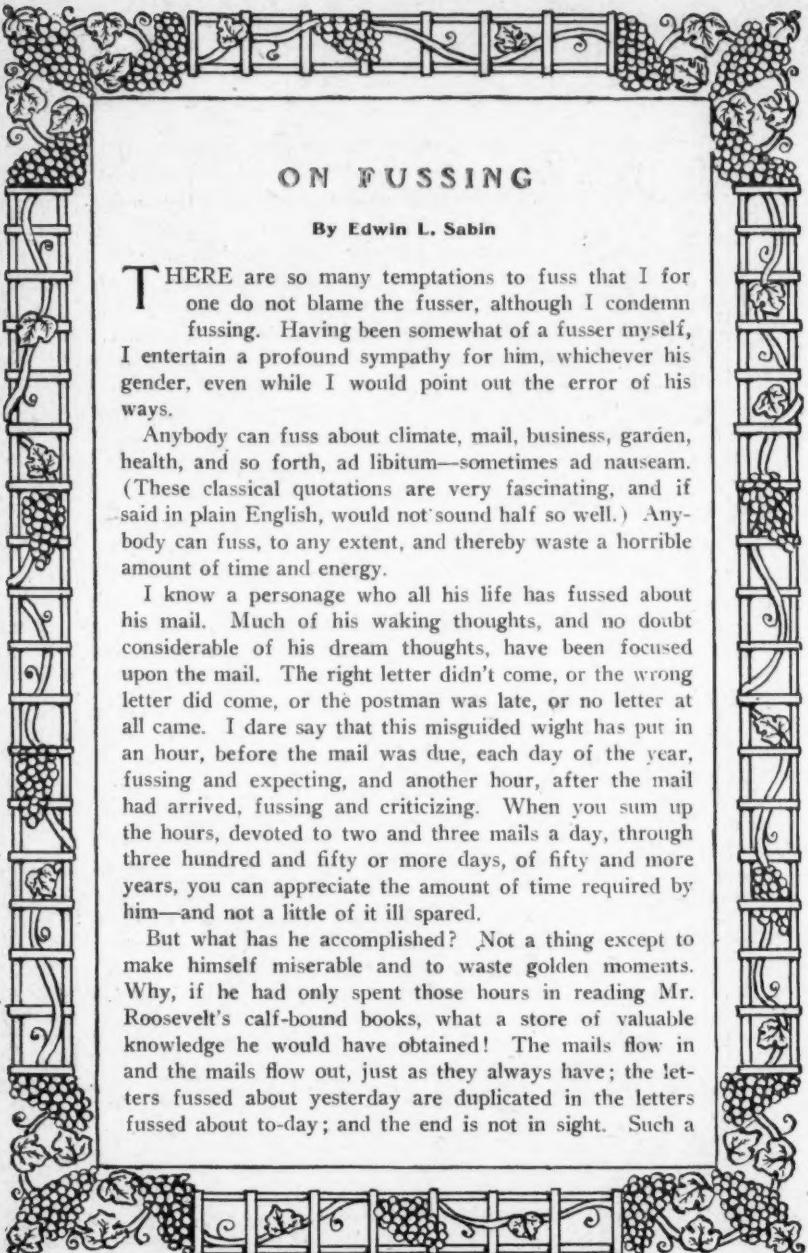
It all seemed perfectly simple, and she had entirely forgotten John Enwright. She did not recall him, as a matter of fact, until she had telephoned a cable message to Guilford. It was addressed to Halloran Lord, at the Rubens Studios, New York, and it said:

I'm sailing on the *Lusitania* Tuesday.
Please have cable at the boat whether you
want me. All my love.

LUCY.

Then she remembered John Enwright. But so inconsistent is love, so cruel as well as kind, so brutally selfish as well as so divinely unselfish, that it seemed to her he mattered very little. The only thing that really mattered was whether Halloran would cable and what he would cable.

And when, on Tuesday morning, her shaking fingers tore the message open, and she saw the inconclusive words: "Dear, dear Lucy, come," Enwright and all that he stood for vanished down dim aisles of her mind. She was going home—home that was furnished with love and work and self-sacrifice. She was through with the fleshpots of Egypt.



ON FUSSING

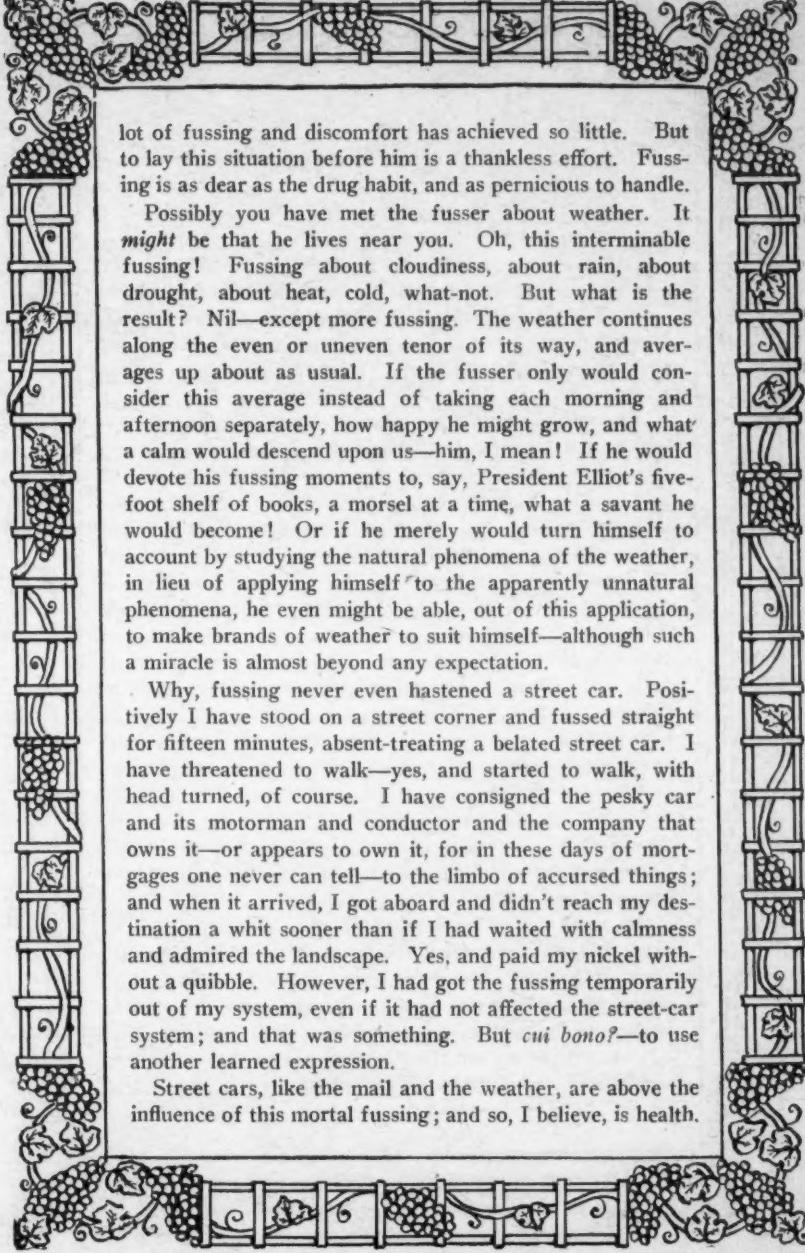
By Edwin L. Sabin

HERE are so many temptations to fuss that I for one do not blame the fuzzer, although I condemn fussing. Having been somewhat of a fuzzer myself, I entertain a profound sympathy for him, whichever his gender, even while I would point out the error of his ways.

Anybody can fuss about climate, mail, business, garden, health, and so forth, ad libitum—sometimes ad nauseam. (These classical quotations are very fascinating, and if said in plain English, would not sound half so well.) Anybody can fuss, to any extent, and thereby waste a horrible amount of time and energy.

I know a personage who all his life has fussed about his mail. Much of his waking thoughts, and no doubt considerable of his dream thoughts, have been focused upon the mail. The right letter didn't come, or the wrong letter did come, or the postman was late, or no letter at all came. I dare say that this misguided wight has put in an hour, before the mail was due, each day of the year, fussing and expecting, and another hour, after the mail had arrived, fussing and criticizing. When you sum up the hours, devoted to two and three mails a day, through three hundred and fifty or more days, of fifty and more years, you can appreciate the amount of time required by him—and not a little of it ill spared.

But what has he accomplished? Not a thing except to make himself miserable and to waste golden moments. Why, if he had only spent those hours in reading Mr. Roosevelt's calf-bound books, what a store of valuable knowledge he would have obtained! The mails flow in and the mails flow out, just as they always have; the letters fussed about yesterday are duplicated in the letters fussed about to-day; and the end is not in sight. Such a

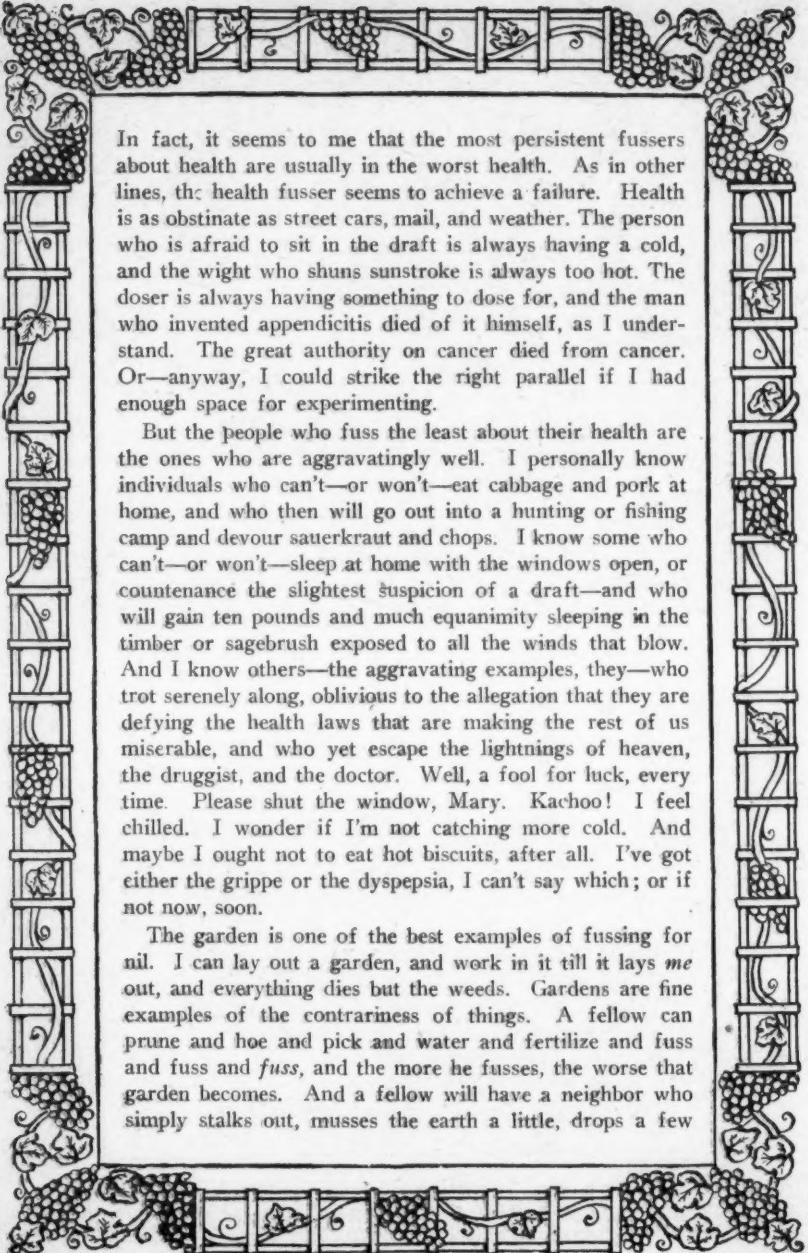


lot of fussing and discomfort has achieved so little. But to lay this situation before him is a thankless effort. Fussing is as dear as the drug habit, and as pernicious to handle.

Possibly you have met the fuzzer about weather. It *might* be that he lives near you. Oh, this interminable fussing! Fussing about cloudiness, about rain, about drought, about heat, cold, what-not. But what is the result? Nil—except more fussing. The weather continues along the even or uneven tenor of its way, and averages up about as usual. If the fuzzer only would consider this average instead of taking each morning and afternoon separately, how happy he might grow, and what a calm would descend upon us—him, I mean! If he would devote his fussing moments to, say, President Elliot's five-foot shelf of books, a morsel at a time, what a savant he would become! Or if he merely would turn himself to account by studying the natural phenomena of the weather, in lieu of applying himself to the apparently unnatural phenomena, he even might be able, out of this application, to make brands of weather to suit himself—although such a miracle is almost beyond any expectation.

Why, fussing never even hastened a street car. Positively I have stood on a street corner and fussed straight for fifteen minutes, absent-treating a belated street car. I have threatened to walk—yes, and started to walk, with head turned, of course. I have consigned the pesky car and its motorman and conductor and the company that owns it—or appears to own it, for in these days of mortgages one never can tell—to the limbo of accursed things; and when it arrived, I got aboard and didn't reach my destination a whit sooner than if I had waited with calmness and admired the landscape. Yes, and paid my nickel without a quibble. However, I had got the fussing temporarily out of my system, even if it had not affected the street-car system; and that was something. But *cui bono?*—to use another learned expression.

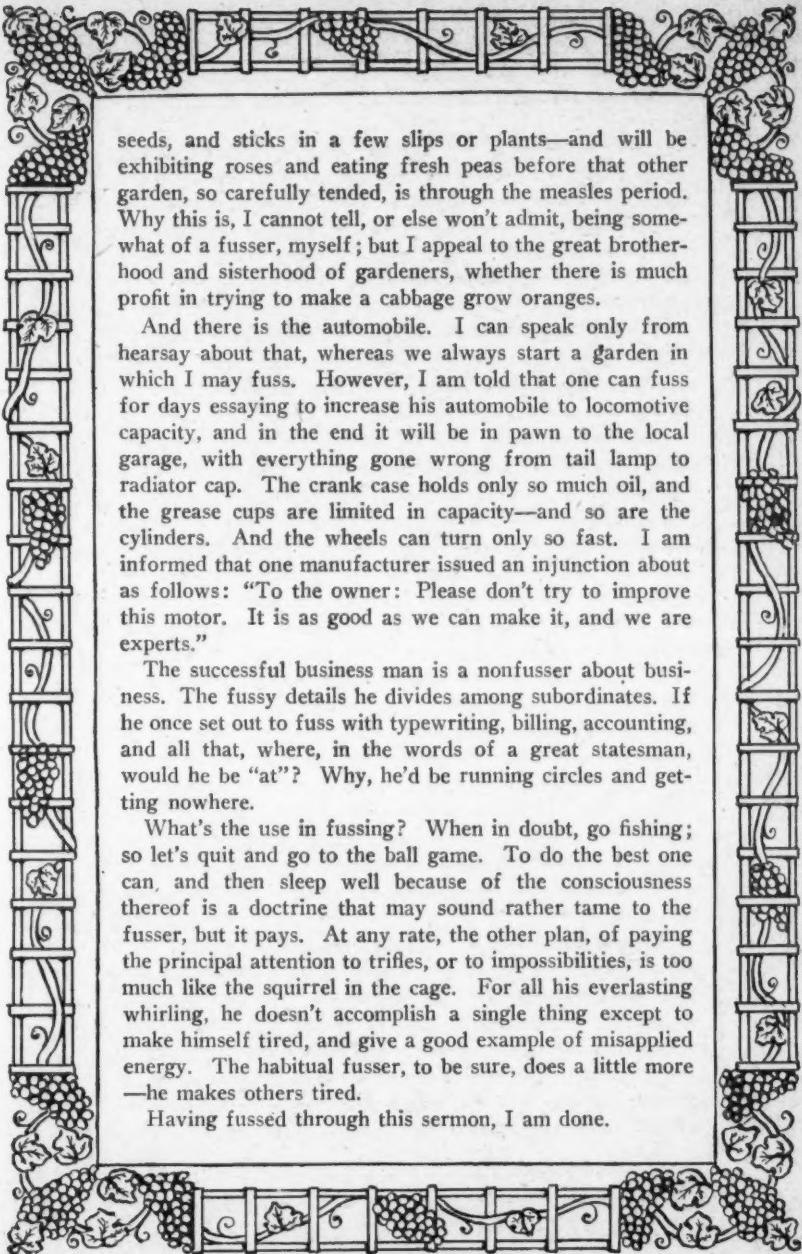
Street cars, like the mail and the weather, are above the influence of this mortal fussing; and so, I believe, is health.



In fact, it seems to me that the most persistent fusers about health are usually in the worst health. As in other lines, the health fuser seems to achieve a failure. Health is as obstinate as street cars, mail, and weather. The person who is afraid to sit in the draft is always having a cold, and the wight who shuns sunstroke is always too hot. The doser is always having something to dose for, and the man who invented appendicitis died of it himself, as I understand. The great authority on cancer died from cancer. Or—anyway, I could strike the right parallel if I had enough space for experimenting.

But the people who fuss the least about their health are the ones who are aggravatingly well. I personally know individuals who can't—or won't—eat cabbage and pork at home, and who then will go out into a hunting or fishing camp and devour sauerkraut and chops. I know some who can't—or won't—sleep at home with the windows open, or countenance the slightest suspicion of a draft—and who will gain ten pounds and much equanimity sleeping in the timber or sagebrush exposed to all the winds that blow. And I know others—the aggravating examples, they—who trot serenely along, oblivious to the allegation that they are defying the health laws that are making the rest of us miserable, and who yet escape the lightnings of heaven, the druggist, and the doctor. Well, a fool for luck, every time. Please shut the window, Mary. Kachoo! I feel chilled. I wonder if I'm not catching more cold. And maybe I ought not to eat hot biscuits, after all. I've got either the gripe or the dyspepsia, I can't say which; or if not now, soon.

The garden is one of the best examples of fussing for nil. I can lay out a garden, and work in it till it lays *me* out, and everything dies but the weeds. Gardens are fine examples of the contrariness of things. A fellow can prune and hoe and pick and water and fertilize and fuss and fuss and fuss, and the more he fusses, the worse that garden becomes. And a fellow will have a neighbor who simply stalks out, musses the earth a little, drops a few



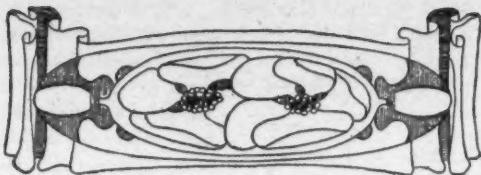
seeds, and sticks in a few slips or plants—and will be exhibiting roses and eating fresh peas before that other garden, so carefully tended, is through the measles period. Why this is, I cannot tell, or else won't admit, being somewhat of a fuzzer, myself; but I appeal to the great brotherhood and sisterhood of gardeners, whether there is much profit in trying to make a cabbage grow oranges.

And there is the automobile. I can speak only from hearsay about that, whereas we always start a garden in which I may fuss. However, I am told that one can fuss for days essaying to increase his automobile to locomotive capacity, and in the end it will be in pawn to the local garage, with everything gone wrong from tail lamp to radiator cap. The crank case holds only so much oil, and the grease cups are limited in capacity—and so are the cylinders. And the wheels can turn only so fast. I am informed that one manufacturer issued an injunction about as follows: "To the owner: Please don't try to improve this motor. It is as good as we can make it, and we are experts."

The successful business man is a nonfusser about business. The fussy details he divides among subordinates. If he once set out to fuss with typewriting, billing, accounting, and all that, where, in the words of a great statesman, would he be "at"? Why, he'd be running circles and getting nowhere.

What's the use in fussing? When in doubt, go fishing; so let's quit and go to the ball game. To do the best one can, and then sleep well because of the consciousness thereof is a doctrine that may sound rather tame to the fuzzer, but it pays. At any rate, the other plan, of paying the principal attention to trifles, or to impossibilities, is too much like the squirrel in the cage. For all his everlasting whirling, he doesn't accomplish a single thing except to make himself tired, and give a good example of misapplied energy. The habitual fuzzer, to be sure, does a little more—he makes others tired.

Having fussed through this sermon, I am done.



A Divertisement

By Frederick M. Smith

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

IT was raining in Rotterdam; it had been raining in Rotterdam for more than a week; not pleasant Dutch showers with winks of sunshine and blue between, but a gray mist and a steady downpour out of a leaden sky. Whatever may be one's private opinion about Rotterdam at other times, in such weather one takes its name in vain. It is of a dreariness!

A young lady wandering aimlessly along the Hoogstraat was decidedly of that opinion, and looked it. She was enveloped from neck to heels in a silver-gray silk waterproof; the raindrops covered her grayer tam-o'-shanter, and beaded her blond hair with myraid pearls. Yet she was drippy and disconsolate. She was plainly not a Dutch maiden; the pink of her cheeks was too delicate, her figure too svelte, her feet were not large enough. Now and then she stopped to look into a shop window; now and then she had to lower her eyes from the too admiring gaze of young male Hollanders.

Suddenly—it was while she was standing before a window where were displayed women's garments—a voice at her elbow said briskly: "I beg your pardon, but do you speak English?"

She started, and turned. A tall and very wet young man in a mackintosh was at her elbow, looking inquisitively

down at her. He had a frank, open countenance with a humorous nose and an aggressive jaw.

For a moment she considered him in blank surprise. Then she twitched her shoulders, as who would say, "I don't care," and returned his look with an audacious sparkle. "A little," said she.

"You are, perhaps, an American?"

"Perhaps," she admitted.

"So am I."

"I should have supposed you were a foreigner," she observed sweetly. "It's usually foreigners who speak to women they don't know on the street."

"It depends," he argued, with a grin. "I'm here waiting for my boat; the weather's got on my nerves. I'm lonely; you're a compatriot; you looked as if you were lonely, too. You looked," he decided, "as if you wouldn't mind being spoken to."

Her breath was exhaled in a scarcely audible "Ah!" and the spark in her blue eyes danced almost to flame. "I confess," said she, "that I was lonely and homesick and desolate. In fact"—her glance defied him to make the most of what she was going to say—"in fact, I was hoping that some strange man, some wicked, strange man, would come along and speak to me. Anything would be a relief—provided the man was amusing."

"I don't know whether that exactly describes me," he said, "but it might."

"Oh, well, if it might," said she.

"I could even be amusing under the proper stimulus."

"Such as—"

"Such as the presence of a sympathetic young woman."

"Hum!" said she.

"Seeing you just here also reminded me that you might do me a service. I want the advice of a person with taste."

"How do you know I have taste?"

"By the color of your eyes; you seem to have chosen them precisely to match your hair."

"Why not the other way about?"

"Your eyes again. I can see by the look of them that you are not to be suspected of tampering with your hair."

She made him a little duck of acknowledgment.

He pointed to the window. "You see, I've got to get some sort of something for my—for a young woman at home. She's very domestic."

"For your fiancée, doubtless?" said she.

He made a gesture of dismissal. "Let's not particularize. At this moment I have no fiancée. I am wholly engrossed by an unknown beauty."

"A trifle clumsy," said she, with a despairing shake of the head.

"I beg your pardon. One can't always keep to the high level of wit demanded by one's company. Even the best of us slip. As I say, I think she'd like one of those long Dutch aprons the Dutch women wear."

"Then why not get her one?"

"Precisely what I was about to suggest. The deuce of it is I don't know what size she wears. But if you would



"I beg your pardon, but do you speak English?"



She slowly pivoted for his inspection, then faced him interrogatively.

consent to lend yourself for, say ten minutes— She's about your height."

"Ah!"

"And you could help choose the color, too."

"Isn't it going pretty fast for me to go shopping with a stranger?"

"You would be diverting yourself by being in the company of the wicked."

"I said I wouldn't mind being *spoken to* by the wicked," she corrected. "I didn't agree to go jaunting with them."

"There's no spice in merely passing the time of day. You could do that with the postman."

She moved so that she could peer into the shop. It looked innocent enough. A fat and genial Dutchman stood placidly behind a counter, waiting on a portly vrouw who was buying buttons; a girl was showing muslin to another lady.

"All right," consented the girl with the tam. "I'll help you."

He followed her inside, and by means of French, German, and English they made two clerks understand what was wanted. The model took off her waterproof, revealing a delightfully slender figure, garbed in a fascinating one-piece frock made of a coarse, dull-blue stuff. With her gentian-blue eyes, her peachblow cheeks, and her yellow hair, she suggested a cool, flower-starred Alpine valley; for with all her vivacity there was a certain aloofness about her that attracted the young man more than anything else. He looked his admiration as she slipped into one of the long aprons—blue it was, with white braid at the V of the neck, and on the cuffs. She slowly pivoted for his inspection, then faced him interrogatively.

For twenty minutes they tried on and discussed and bargained; he suggesting this, she proving that something a little different was what he really wanted. They had become quite friendly and companionable by the time they started

to leave the shop, he carrying a bundle of three aprons under his arm.

But now her manner suffered a change. She became distinctly less cordial. At the door she stopped and peered up and down the street before stepping out on the sidewalk.

"What is it?" he inquired, puzzled.

"I didn't know but I might see my husband."

"Husband!" he ejaculated. "Are you married?"

"Of course."

"Hum-m!" he said, looking at her severely.

"Does that make any difference?"

"Only that I shall not be able to fall in love with you."

She received this with a shrug and a little curl of her lips. "Why not? I didn't know that men had any great objection to falling in love with married women. In fact, I thought they rather liked it. One can do it without committing oneself."

"Do you want me to make love to you?"

"Every woman likes to be made love to," she threw back. "Provided it is done—gracefully, and—with circumspection."

"Can you trust a man who is in love—honestly in love, the way a man might be with you—can you trust him to be circumspect?"

She looked up into his face as he moved at her side, and said demurely, "I'm not sure that I could trust you."

"Hurrah! Now we are getting on! And I'll suggest something I thought of the instant I saw you."

"What?"

"That it would be pleasant to sit opposite you at luncheon."

"If the luncheon were good—perhaps," she admitted.

"Even if it were a luncheon of herbs," he said. "As for your husband—"

* "I left him reading a novel at the

hotel. He was quite cross. If we meet him, I can tell him that you are my cousin."

"You lack invention," he replied. "Are unknown cousins hanging around the streets of Rotterdam?"

"Where did you leave your wife?" she countered.

"Have I a wife?"

"Only a man who was accustomed to shopping with women would have acted as you did when we were buying those aprons."

"There are such things as cousins, as you have just suggested; but even if there weren't, one can't always be with one's wife, any more than one always wants to be with one's husband."

"Confused but fairly clear," she laughed. "I understand—and perhaps sympathize."

"There's a quiet, modest restaurant but a little way farther on. It's now noon. I suggest that we lunch comfortably together. We forget our—responsibilities. We talk. I smoke. At two we separate, and go back to conventionalities. Voilà! as the heroes in the stories of the Latin Quarter say."

She laughed at this; and, putting a hand on her elbow, he guided her across the street in the direction of a bridge that spanned a canal.

Fifteen minutes later they were looking at each other across a white-clothed table whose glass shone and whose cutlery glistened. Through a broad window they could look out on a line of red brick houses pointed with white, and a canal where blunt-nosed barges seemed to huddle in the rain.

She mopped the water from her hair and smiled comfortably. "This is cozier."

"And it's secluded; nobody will find us here."

"I hope not."

Then they argued a great deal over the luncheon, which finally resolved itself into a clear brown soup, a sole

fresh as the sea, delicious veal cutlets with little round potatoes in cream, and green-and-white crinkly salad, with cheese and coffee to follow. With the luncheon itself came a slender bottle of Ahrweiler, piquant to the taste, golden to the eye, that sent the warmth of June days into their hearts.

"What shall I call you?" he queried, as the soup arrived.

"'Say' is always available," she observed, with a twinkle.

"It must be something nice and suggestive—like Helen?" he hazarded.

"Helen suggests two things, only one of which is complimentary."

"I meant the complimentary one," he assured her. "How's Sally? Every girl with blue eyes and yellow hair should be named Sally. See Bret Harte, and any popular Southern novelist. In Southern novels the young lady is always addressed as 'Miss Sally' by the old negro servant."

Sally chortled. "And what shall I call you?"

"My name might be Norval, on the Grampian hills."

"It might be, but it isn't," she retorted.

"Father calls me William, but the fellers call me Bill."

"How literary you are! Are you a college professor or a novelist? What's the name of the man who falls in love with the Sally of the Southern novels?"

"Then I may make love to you?" he asked, suddenly serious.

She tilted her chin ever so slightly, a smile sat implike on her lips. "But you have been making love to me all the time."

"No."

"With your eyes."

"My eyes are poor spokesmen."

"They seem to do well enough," she remarked dryly, fumbling a bit of fish with her fork.

"I want to say, 'I love you.' "

"So soon?" she said lightly.

But he refused to adopt her tone. His own was quiet. "You dared me to," he said. "And now I can't help it. Is it so hard to believe?"

"Now you're becoming serious."

"I love you," he repeated.

"You forget that I'm a married woman."

"Yet you love me already."

"What!" she exclaimed, in sharp amazement and protest.

"Else would you be sitting here?"

"You forget that it was because I was bored and you were—lonely. It was merely for excitement."

"One can't play with fire," said he solemnly.

She greeted this with what came very near to a giggle.

"You don't like me at all?"

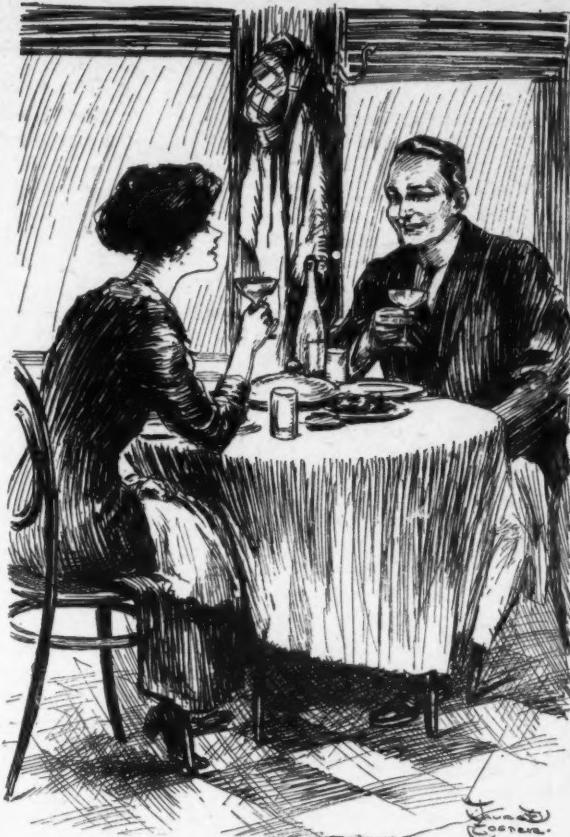
"I didn't say that."

"If things were not as they are, if — You could care?" he urged.

"If they were not as they are—I don't know. Perhaps—" She looked away from him with an evident desire to decide the question uninfluenced by the ardor of his glance; and as she did so, she caught a glimpse of two people just entering the room.

"Good gracious!" she cried affrightedly.

He turned to follow the direction of her eyes.



"What shall I call you?" he queried.

"It's Clara Perkins and her husband. Here, pretend to be reading; give me that paper."

But she was not quite quick enough. Clara Perkins' sharp eyes had spied her, and Clara Perkins, masterful, delighted, followed by her plump, well-groomed husband, sped across the room.

"My dear Louise!" she chanted. "What are you doing here?"

Sally—or, as it appeared, Louise—frowned at her resentfully and lifted

her voice in a wail. "What are we doing here! We're doing the Low Countries. We're waiting for our boat. We got into Holland over two weeks ago and we dragged around from town to town in the rain. Finally we got sick and plunged back here to stay till the relief expedition departs for America. We've been getting crosser and crosser, till to-day Billy had the Heaven-born idea of pretending he didn't know me and trying to flirt with me. We've been having a scandalously gorgeous time. He's making violent love to me now."

"What a divine idea!" said Mrs. Perkins. "And what a treat to have a hus-

band who will make love to you. Harry doesn't do anything but play billiards and smoke, and find fault with the weather."

"Well," said Billy, grinning cheerfully at the visitors, "I won't say that you're welcome. You've spoiled a very exciting flirtation. But since you're here, sit down and we'll try to cheer you up."

"Do," said Louise. "We had about reached the place where it was proper we should be interrupted. Goodness knows what Billy might have done!"

And Billy, under the pretense of moving some of the silver, found opportunity to squeeze his wife's hand gently.



The Nearing Christmas

WHY should I feel that Christmastide is near?
Thanksgiving has not showed
His ruddy face, his load
Of scarlet apples, or that golden sphere
The stubble yields to us.
Still leans the fodder truss
(The mart of wee, brisk field mice scouting here)
And yet, and yet this sense of Christmas near!

No snow has grayed this sky
Wearing soft ashes of the rose of June,
Holding aloft a thin and silver moon,
Yet steals a spirit, shy
But real, from that great love time dawning soon.

Is it the clump of green
High set against the sheen
Of sunset—mistletoe that, nestlike, sways?
Is it the deepening chill,
Half sweet, half sad, that marks the shortening days?
Perhaps the stars' sharp white
Pricking the dark-blue height—
The little stars the shepherds, by their blaze
Upon the hills one night
Knew, till their wondering sight
Blinked at a great new Star—at Heaven's own light!

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.



There was a terrible racket, because the furnace register was right there.

In Training

By Ellis Parker Butler

Author of "Pigs Is Pigs," "P. Casey, \$4.00," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

WELL, I didn't go to Sunday school for a long while, because father said it didn't seem to do me much good, and mother had the new baby, and she thought:

"What's the use of spending the time brushing his hair and putting a clean collar on him, and then, half the time,

he don't go anyway? He starts, but he don't get there."

And that was so. Nobody seemed to care much whether I went or not except May—she's my sister—and she said: "For goodness' sake, let him stay at home if he wants to! I'm nervous every minute he's in the church." So I

didn't go until about Christmas time, when all the kids began going again.

Of course, everybody in our family made fun of me and said: "Oh, see little Georgie! How punctual he wants to be at Sunday school! I wonder if Christmas is coming soon?" and things like that, when I tried to grab the hairbrush away from May so I could get the hair on the middle of my head to lie down by Sunday-school time. It takes a long time to get that hair to lie down; you have to sop it and then brush it and brush it, and then it generally gets dry and begins to stand up by the time they are praying, and you don't know whether it is tickling because it is beginning to stand up or because some fellow is fooling with it. But it wasn't on account of Christmas I was going. Of course, I didn't stay away just because Christmas was coming, but people can't seem to understand that a boy can get religious feelings the same as other folks. But he can. Only it is only an extra-fine kind of boy that does.

I wouldn't go to Sunday school just to get what you get off the Christmas tree. Little kids do, but boys don't. Only, when all the fellows are going to Sunday school, there isn't anybody to play with unless you go, too. So I went. It was quite different from when I went the year before. It looked to me as if there was more religion and not so much "Georgie, sit still!" about it.

I guess the reason was that we had a man teacher instead of a woman teacher. The Christmas before my teacher was a woman, and she didn't wear a collar—just lace—and you couldn't think of anything but an ostrich, and when you think of ostriches all the time, you don't get much good out of Sunday school. You keep thinking of the different things ostriches can eat. That was because she had such a long neck. But she got promoted to the bigger boys, and I guess they didn't

notice it. All they noticed was the girls' class in the next pew.

But Mr. Coddington didn't give you time to think what he looked like, because he began teaching you right away, and before he had taught me two Sundays, I wanted to forsake evil and live an upright Christian life, so that I need never feel shame or get into evil ways or do anything an upright Christian girl wouldn't like a fellow to do, if he was her fellow. When Mr. Coddington talked to us like that—only he didn't mention any girls—I felt that that was the way I wanted to be, and when I looked across the aisle and saw how good and Christian Daisy Wells looked in the blue hat she had on, and felt how bad and evil I had been, I felt like the dickens and resolved to be a better boy and bring at least five cents every Sunday and stop learning to swear, and to learn the first chapter of John by heart by Easter. I made up my mind that as soon as I had nerve enough, I would start to prayer meeting and tell what a sinner I had been, and join church. I thought it would be nice if Daisy Wells and me joined at the same time, but I didn't say anything about it. I just walked home with her, instead of pushing the boys all over the sidewalk, like I always used to.

I didn't say anything to my family about the great change that had come over me, because mother was too busy with the baby to have much time to listen, and father isn't the kind of man you tell such things to. He's always thinking how low the wood is getting, and how he'll raise the money to pay the hired girl, and other worldly things. The religiousest one in our family was May, because she taught the infant class in Sunday school and had a Bible all lined off in red ink and green ink, and you'd think she'd have been the one to tell, but somehow she was just the last one I could have told anything to. It seems to me as if when a fellow wanted

to talk religion to girls, he always wanted to talk it to girls in another family. May was good looking enough to talk it to, but she was too old for me, anyway. She was about the age for Mr. Coddington to talk it to.

So the only way my family could know was by my works, and somehow no matter how much Christian work a boy does around the house, he gets scolded just the same. It don't make much difference how high your heart is uplifted if you forget to come home in time to fill the wood box. And if you come home in time to fill it, it is nothing but filled, anyway. So there you are! I never thought anything at all about the early Christian martyrs and what a hard time they had until one night when I had been playing with Daisy Wells and came home with an uplifted heart and got scolded because I had not brought in any wood.

It is a cruel thing to come home with a heart full of Christian joy and get a scolding, so I blubbered to myself all the time I was bringing in the wood that night. I felt like a real martyr, but I guess I wasn't. I guess I was careless, because mother had had to leave the baby and bring in some wood for supper, because Maggie said she would leave if she had to bring it in, and May was at the Ladies' Guild.

But having a truly religious heart made me feel a lot better, and my life opened out with a fuller hope, like Mr. Coddington said it would. Up to then I hadn't had any hope at all. I was leading a hopeless life, just doing anything that came handy and having a good time, and not thinking of hell at all, but now I tried to be as hopeful as I could, and I guess I was. I would have been even more religious than I was except that I was afraid Mr. Coddington would notice it too much and speak to May about it. I had cold shivers every time I thought of Mr. Coddington speaking to May about me. I

wouldn't have cared if he had spoken to the preacher, but a sister is different, especially when she has been religious long enough to be a member of the church and to teach a Sunday-school class. If she hears her young brother is getting religious, she is just as apt to think he is an amateur at it, and josh him about it, as anything.

So that's why I didn't let Mr. Coddington know anything about it, and the big shove was one of the ways I thought of not to let him know. I thought of other ways, too, but the big shove was about the best. The pews in our church were longer than long enough for a man to stretch out in and go to sleep, and our class filled two pews. The front pew didn't dare do the big shove because Mr. Coddington sat in that pew, but we did. We would sit nice and quiet until Mr. Coddington looked over to where May sat, and then we'd all hunch down toward the end of the pew at once. Then we'd sit still until he looked away again, and we'd hunch again. All the time the boy in the end of the pew would be getting hunched tighter and tighter, and by the time Mr. Coddington had looked at May as often as he could between the opening song and collection time, the boy in the end of the pew would be squeezed so tight he had to breathe through his mouth. But his ribs never broke. Boys have tough ribs.

So one Sunday just before Christmas we had Fatty Morrow in the end of the pew and we were trying to see if we could flatten him out thin. When you get real interested in anything like that, you forget about being religious and just want to shove. I suppose that's why men forget to be religious when they get into business. They get interested and forget. So I was on the end, and we couldn't shove down any more, and I forgot, and I twisted around and put my feet against the middle of the pew and pushed with my feet, and maybe



When I climbed the fence into the country club, he gave it up and just swore at me, but I didn't stop to hear what he swore.

we would have thinned Fatty some, only the end of the pew fell out. There was a terrible racket, because the furnace register was right there, and, anyway, Fatty and the end of the pew would have made a good deal of noise, falling that way. So we were all in disgrace, but I didn't think anybody knew it was my fault.

So that evening I was coming home from Fatty Morrow's, and I was at the side door, trying to sneak in without

making a noise, when May and Mr. Coddington came home from union meeting in the Courthouse Square, and I heard them. Mr. Coddington was talking.

"And what I think," he said, "is that your parents are very lax in not taking him sternly in hand before it is too late. He is on the road to becoming a thoroughly bad boy."

"I don't think my parents are particularly lax," said my sister May, and I

could hear tacks in her voice. Maybe icicle points would tell you better what I mean.

"If the little villain were taken in hand properly—" said Mr. Coddington.

"I would rather you would not call my brother a little villain," said May.

"What other word would describe him?" asked Mr. Coddington. "A boy that—"

"It's not necessary for you to describe him at all. Not to me," said May. "I think I know Georgie better than you do, Mr. Coddington, and I know he is a splendid boy at heart. Lately he has been acting somewhat oddly, but he is a good boy."

"That's hardly what I should call him myself," said Mr. Coddington. "If you want to know—"

"I don't want to know!" said May, and I guess she was pretty mad, from the way her voice sounded. "I prefer my own opinion. I consider George a perfectly good boy, and I think you should apologize for speaking of him to me in such a way."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Coddington. "Then I presume I have no right to my own opinions, Miss May?"

"Not if they are that my brother is a bad boy," she said.

"Now, May!" he said.

"I mean every word I have said."

"But a man has a right to his opinions, whatever the subject may be," said Mr. Coddington. "I'm sorry I said anything about the boy, but I cannot say what is not so. I do think he is a thoroughly bad boy."

"Thank you!" sister said. "Good night." She walked up the porch steps, and then she said:

"And good-by!"

So she went in and shut the door, and he stood a while and then he went away. So I didn't do anything. I was awful glad to have May stick up for me that way, because a fellow always

likes to have folks think he is good when he is good, and I thought a lot more of May than I had ever thought of her before, but I wasn't mad at Mr. Coddington either. If I had been in his place, I would have stuck it out just the way he did, because the girls all think things have got to be the way they want them just because they want them that way. I tried to remember what he said and how he said it, because some time I might have to say something like it, and he said it fine.

Just then May came to lock the side door and I had to go in or be locked out, and I went in, and she had been crying. So I said: "Gee, the wind makes a fellow's eyes red to-night!" because a fellow never even likes to think of women crying. But I guess I made a mistake, because May put her arms around me and kissed me. And that was worse. Crying kisses are always so slimy. So I said:

"Aw, don't you mind him, May. He's nothing but a long-legged old clam!"

I didn't think until afterward that clams don't have legs. But it's no use trying to comfort girls. May just lifted her head up and said:

"I wish, Georgie, you would mind your own business!"

That's what a fellow gets.

Well, I didn't know, for a few days, whether I ever wanted to go back to Sunday school—Christmas or no Christmas. I thought for a couple of days I would give up living a better life and just go ahead and sink into degradation and have all the fun I could, but Daisy Wells had told me she was going to put something I'd like on the Christmas tree, and I didn't like to disappoint her by not being there to get it. And I wondered what it would be, anyway. So I decided I would go ahead learning the first chapter of John just as if the ends of the pews had been screwed on instead of nailed on.

That's one thing about our kind of

Sunday school. They don't throw you out no matter if you do bust up the pews. Of course, you couldn't do it often, and father had to pay for mending that one, but they let me come back. Only I had to sit next to Mr. Coddington. I didn't like that very well, because, while I wanted to be religious, I didn't want to feel so close to the boss of the class. I wanted to have room to be religious in my own way. I felt sort of ashamed to be so close to the teacher.

But he was a pretty good one, anyway, and this is what I started out to tell about. The Sunday before Christmas, he asked us which we would rather have—books or hockey sticks, and we said, and then he said:

"Boys, this class is much larger than it was a short while ago, and I won't hint that it is because Christmas is coming, but if it takes a Christmas tree and presents to bring you to Sunday school, I'd be willing to have them four times a year. Human nature is only human nature, isn't it?"

I guessed he wanted us to say "yes," so I said it.

"But there are some difficulties in the way of having too many Christmas trees a year, so I have thought of something that will interest you. In midsummer we have the Sunday-school picnic, which has a revivifying effect on our attendance, and I propose that we have, this spring, a class field day. As soon as the ground is suitable in the spring, we'll have a field day, with running, jumping, and all sorts of athletic games, and I'll give prizes to the winners. I'll give something you want—that you'd be glad to win. Now, there is the proposition. A field day, open only to my class, and open only to those who miss not more than one Sunday a month. How does it strike you?"

Well, it struck us all right, and we said so. We talked about it a lot and almost forgot Christmas. We all

thought we could win something; you never know how much better somebody else can do everything you can do, until afterward. I hadn't thought much about how strong I was, or how fast, or how good at jumping, until then. I just thought I could run and jump and do everything better than any one else because God had made me that way, but when I tried running with Wiggy Wiggers a while after Christmas, I saw I wasn't as good at it as I had thought I was. Wiggy was better than I was, and, come to find out, there wasn't anything I could do much better than any one else to make me sure I could win a prize. So I thought I had better train myself or else quit going to Sunday school, and when Mr. Coddington said one of the prizes would be for cross-country running, I kept on going to Sunday school.

The reason was that most of the boys live in town where the houses are thicker together, but I live where there are plenty of fields out back. You can run for miles out back of my house, if your wind holds out. So when Mr. Coddington asked us to tell him what prizes we were going to try for, I said, "Cross-country running," and he said that was fine. He said he had been a cross-country runner at school, and that he was a good one still, and I believed it, because he had long legs and wasn't very heavy. He was tall, but thin.

There are just three houses out back of our house. One of them is the house Daisy Wells lives in, and another is the house the Shupps live in, and the other is where the two Dutchmen live. Maybe they are not Dutchmen, but that's what we call them. Whenever I went out back to play with Daisy Wells and the two little Shupps, we used to go as close to that house as we dared and then yell:

Nix come arouse
To the Dutchman's house!

Then we would run as fast as we

c o u l d. Sometimes one of the little Shupps would fall down and begin to bawl, and then the other little Shupp would fall down and begin to bawl, and then Daisy Wells' little brother would begin to bawl, whether he fell down or not, but Daisy was a good runner and we would get behind her house and peek out, but the Dutchmen never seemed to care. So we would go back and yell it over again.

Mostly one of the old Dutchmen was in his garden and the other was in the house, but they wouldn't get mad, even when we all stood in a row on their sidewalk and sang:

Nix come a row-us
To the Dutchman's
how-us!

Nix come a row-us
To the Dutchman's
how-us!

So we had to pretend they were after us. The Shupps and Daisy Wells' little brother really thought they were after us, and that's why they fell down and bawled, but we knew they were not. We ran because we wanted to, but when I entered for the cross-country run, I thought it would be a good thing if I could get the two Dutchmen to chase me. I didn't think it that way exactly. What I thought was, "Pshaw! I don't care if they do chase me. I can beat them running." So one day when we



"Well, George," he said, "we had a nice little run, didn't we?"

were trying to break the insulators on the telephone poles by throwing clods at them, I threw some at the Dutchmen's house, and as soon as I hit the front door the second time, it opened and out came a Dutchman, and he was mad, I tell you! He came right after me, pushing the Shupps aside as if they were weeds, and not stopping to look at Daisy Wells or her little brother, and I cut across lots on the jump. That was a good run. He couldn't run very fast, but he was in earnest about it, and

he did the best he could, but when I climbed the fence into the country club, he gave it up and just leaned on the fence and swore at me, but I didn't stop to hear what he swore. I circled round and got into Daisy Wells' back yard the back way.

After that I had some very good training. Every time I needed some, I got Daisy Wells and her little brother and the Shupps, and we threw clods at the Dutchmen's house until one of them came out and chased me. I was sorry they were not better runners, but they tried as hard as they could, and I couldn't complain. I was getting to be a good runner when all at once they stopped chasing me. I guess they thought they couldn't catch me, but I wasn't sure. I thought maybe they had decided that we were just up to innocent fun and that a few clods didn't matter anyway, so long as we didn't break any windows. A Dutchman gets awful mad when he gets mad, but he is patient and longsuffering before he does get mad, unless he's the kind that gets mad immediately.

For a while I had to do my cross-country training without a chaser, but it wasn't so much fun, so I tried to think of some way to stir the Dutchmen up, and I thought of a good way. There was a pile of ashes and tin cans and old bottles at one side of the Dutchmen's house, and one evening after supper, when I felt I needed some good training, I threw clods at the house a while and then I sneaked up to the side window and put two flat bottles on the window sill, one on top of the other, and all of a sudden I mashed them with a brick. It sounded just like a window breaking, and I thought that ought to make the Dutchmen mad enough, and as soon as I broke the bottles, I crouched down ready for a good start as soon as the door opened. It opened, all right!

It opened with a bang, and two men came out with a jump, but they were

not the two Dutchmen—they were two young men, and you bet I started off in a hurry! I made a leap like an antelope and got out of the yard and started across the back field, and the two young men came right after me, only they widened apart like the two arms of a Y, so that I knew they were trying to head me off. They were good runners, too. I saw I had to hurry all I could.

The Shupps and Daisy Wells' little brother just fell down and bawled, and Daisy Wells ran home and upstairs and hid under her bed, but I cut straight for the country club, with those two fellows right after me. I was the first one over the fence, but they didn't stop like the Dutchmen; they came over, too. They didn't yell and shout after me like the Dutchmen, either, and that made me feel scary. It looked like business. So I bent my head down and hustled.

I ran across the golf course toward the seventh hole, because there is a big stone wall back of the seventh hole and all along the country club, from there on, and I knew the two fellows would have to come together more if I ran under the wall, because if they tried to keep widened out, one would have to to climb over the wall, and then he couldn't see me, and I could double back on him. They got closer together, because one had to run behind me inside the wall, and then the wall ended and we came to the cornfield. I turned off to the right into the dead cornfield, and sort of doubled around, because I knew there was a big mushy part of the cornfield and if they tried to cut straight across, they would get in deep.

They got into the mushy part before they knew it, and I thought they would turn back, but they didn't. They went in up to the tops of their shoes, but they kept right on across, and that looked bad. It looked as if they didn't care for anything but getting me. I saw I would have to hustle hard or I would catch something pretty bad, so I crossed



"Want some chocolates, Georgie?" she said, as sweet as pie.

the cornfield and got into Murphy's Lane, and started toward Weston, and ran up the lane until I saw them climb over the fence into it, and then I cut out of the lane again to the right, into a field that had had cabbages in it. They jumped over the fence into the cabbage field before I got out of it. It made me mad—two big brutes like them chasing a poor little boy like me. So I tried to go faster.

I got out of the cabbage field into the road that goes to Brookside, and ran up the road until I saw the two fellows come into it, and then I cut off to the left and went through a farmyard and

along the swamp back of that farmer's pasture, and around the swamp, and up over the sand hill on the other side, and across the old tomato farm, and that came out at the addition somebody had laid out, but had never done any good with. I was pretty well out of breath by that time, but I felt better, because I knew that addition pretty well.

There were miles of it—all laid out in streets, and advertised as good, high property at terms to suit—but nothing was high but the streets. They had been scraped up and filled in, and the blocks between them were all hollows, and wet, and swampy, with locust trees and bind-

weed and thorn bushes and pools of water where skunk cabbage grows, and blackberry bushes all tangled up with old brush and stuff people have dumped. The streets are all grown up with asters, and goldenrod, and sumac as high as a man's head and higher, and unless you know where you are, you don't know where to go.

But I knew all the paths through the blocks between the streets. It was where I had been making for all the time. So I just ran down one street and up another until I came to a tree I knew, and I slipped around that tree and down into the swampy part of the block. You had to walk across a dead tree trunk, and step from one grass hummock to another, and that brought you to a big stump of a tree that was hollowed out on one side and hidden by blackberry bushes covered with dodder stems. When you got inside that, no one could see you. So I got inside and waited about half an hour, and nothing happened.

The other way out of that place is harder, but I didn't want to take any chances. I wanted to get out on the other side and go around by the water tower and the cemetery and come in by the Perryburg Road and get home that way, and the only way to get out on the other side of that block was to walk on the dead grass and reeds that were on top of the mushy mud. You have to walk very easily to walk on a place like that, because you break through easily, and the mud is over your middle if you break through. So I walked as easily as I could until I came to where the ground gets a little higher, and that is right by the other street, and to get out you have to kneel down and crawl through a sort of tunnel under the blackberry bushes. I found the place when I was looking for a warbler's nest. So I got through the bush tunnel and stood up, and somebody

grabbed me by the collar! Gee, I was scared! It was Mr. Coddington.

"Well, George," he said, "we had a nice little run, didn't we?"

"Yes, sir," I said, because I didn't know what else to say.

He took me by the arm, and we started back to town. He didn't hit me, or anything. I guess Sunday-school teachers don't hit. He whistled for the other fellow, and it was Wiggy Wiggers' big brother.

"What are you going to do with me?" I asked, when they hadn't done anything right away.

"What do you think we ought to do?" he asked.

"Nothing," I said. "I was just having fun."

"Very well, George," he said. "Then we will do nothing. We've been having fun, too."

I didn't like that. When people talk that way, they mean it's going to be worse than you think it is. It's going to be something you can't imagine. So I felt pretty bad, but I wanted to know one thing, so I asked him.

"How did you know where I would come out?" I asked.

"George," he said, "I have probably been through that small bird-haunted swamp ten times to every once you have been through it. Do you know a warbler's nest in that clump of blackberry bushes? Mrs. Warbler and I are old friends. She thinks I am one of the family. I saw her build her nest; I saw the eggs; I saw the little warblers; I saw them learn to fly. Did you see the eggs, George?"

"Yes," I said, "I saw them two or three times."

"Well, George," he said, "I'm going to take you home, and leave you there, and that's all I'm going to do with you. I once said you were a bad boy, but a boy that can find a warbler's nest and leave the eggs alone is not as bad as he might

be. He may be a bad boy, but he is not incorrigible."

That sounded better, and we went along all right, and we got to my house, and there were May and father and mother and one of the Dutchmen on the porch, and, when they saw us, father stood up and said:

"So! Here you are! George, come with me!"

Then the Dutchman began to talk, and he said he didn't want me punished, and it turned out he was the sort of Dutchman that had brought over some cold-frame early lettuce when he came to tell father I was bothering him, and that's a pretty good kind of Dutchman. I guess father wasn't very sorry to be coaxed off, for he isn't much of a punisher, and mother would rather weep than whip, any day. But May acted like a tartar.

"Father," she said, "I think he should be soundly chastised! I think it's a disgrace to allow such actions to go unpunished. I always thought George was a good boy, but I know now what sort of boy he is."

Well, that was pretty hot for May! When she said that, I didn't care whether father whaled me or not; I just tried to think how I could get even with May for saying such a thing about her only brother. But she went right ahead lighting into me.

"Mr. Coddington," she said, "I owe you a great apology for what I said the other night about George. You were entirely right. Everything you said about George was true, and I was wrong. He's a bad, bad boy!"

Say, what do you think of that? From a boy's own sister! I thought nobody was going to be for me but the

Dutchman, but you never can tell. It was Mr. Coddington who said the next thing.

"Perhaps I was as much at fault in my estimate as you were, Miss May," he said. "Perhaps George is just plain boy. I'd like to discuss him with you, but my shoes are too muddy. Some time—"

"I'll walk over to the corner with you," she said, and they went, but Wiggy Wiggers' brother went the other way. So mother made me tell the Dutchman I was sorry, and father postponed my whaling, as he always does, and I went upstairs to bed, and that was the end of it, except that I stayed awake to think up how to get even with May, and I was still thinking when she came into my room and came right up and sat on the bed. She had a box of chocolates, and she pushed them at me.

"Want some chocolates, Georgie?" she said, as sweet as pie.

"I'll take some, but all right for you!" I said, and when I sat up to take them, she put her arm around me and kissed me. Ugh! I hate big girls to kiss me. It makes me feel silly. "If I'm as bad as you say, I shouldn't think you'd come giving me chocolates and hugging and kissing me."

"Why, you funny boy!" she said. "I'm glad you were bad. It gave me an opportunity—"

That didn't sound like sense to me, and I told her so.

"To admit I was wrong," she said, and then she sort of bubbled: "Oh, Georgie, you don't know how happy I am!"

But she didn't kiss me that time, because I dodged.





Being a Kuyper

By Alan Bruce

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

DAVIDSON KUYPER was so well born that he never thought about it. This worried his father, who was a Kuyper first and a Christian and good citizen afterward. He often tramped up and down the breakfast room of the old house in New York, while his son sat munching toast and reading a newspaper that the old man had never heard of, and he would eye the boy furtively and fiercely. Once he broke out:

"Never forget, sir, that you are a Kuyper. The name means a great deal in this city, a great deal, sir. It is a name that demands much of him who bears it. A Kuyper is always a gentleman—a gentleman born."

Davidson, who knew that this speech was merely a spoken fragment of much unspoken misgiving on his father's part, smiled and said, without looking up:

"I know it, dad. I have no intention of bringing reproach on the name. But"—with something of the old man's manner—"it won't do for me to be just a Kuyper and nothing else all my life. A man is a man whether he is a Kuyper or a coal heaver. I want to do a man's part."

"See to it that a man's part is not a fool's part, too," snorted the elder Kuyper, as he left the room.

Davidson Kuyper, at twenty-four, was clean-featured and long-limbed, and

his eyes, when they were not dreamy, had a fine directness. He regarded the world with an interested, though somewhat bewildered, air. There seemed to be a great game going on in which he had no part, and he itched to play. But he did not know the rules of the game. Being a Kuyper did not trouble him until he went to college. Before that, from the time he was a little boy in velvet and white socks, walking with his nurse in the park, being a Kuyper had been the most natural thing in the world. At college he first made the acquaintance of the Smiths, Joneses, and Browns of life, and he became aware that they were nobody, but were striving to be somebody, and were engaged in a great game called "getting on." He made the discovery, too, that he was disqualified from playing the game; that he had "gotten on."

But Davidson did not therefore derive a soured satisfaction in his exemption from the game. He was too good a Kuyper for that—too thoroughly an aristocrat to view his birth commercially as an asset. Instead, he became, bone and blood, the friend of a group of Smiths, Joneses, and Browns, who accepted him for what he was—in spite of what he was. They never threw his family up to him. They told him he would make a great lawyer, although they knew that he would never be any-

thing but a great, good Kuyper. Thus it happened that Davidson returned from college a modified Kuyper, and to his father a modified Kuyper was an unprecedented abomination.

No deviation from the path of Kuyperism caused the old man so much anxiety as Davidson's aversion to the class of young women from whom he must one day choose a wife. He found them uninteresting, and manifested a pronounced disinclination to meeting them. His consistent declination of invitations shocked the elder Kuyper so much that, after one flagrant case of neglect on his son's part, he read him a lecture on his duty as a Kuyper and a son that would have precipitated a scene had not Davidson made a hasty exit from the library and the house.

He did not return home that evening, but dined with Smith, Jones, and Brown, who were continuing the game of "getting on" in the study of law and medicine and who resided in a place they called "Hard Luck Flat."

Davidson was moody and sarcastic at dinner. The Kuyper in him kept him silent on the subject of his father, but later, over a pitcher of beer, he rid his mind of much bitterness concerning the society of the Kuyper kind, and he held up the young women of that kind on the sharp fork of ridicule. He called a marriage by arrangement an insult to manhood, and said other things of that sort.

"Hang it!" he cried. "You fellows can do what you like and marry whom you like. You are independent. I haven't any reason for going to work, and a million things would have to be considered before I could marry."

"Take care, Davie," said Smith mockingly. "We'll wake up some morning to find that the king has flown with a shopgirl."

"Well, if I loved a shopgirl and she was worth loving," returned Kuyper heatedly, "why, I'd——"

But his conclusion was drowned in a yell of derision. They told him that he would do exactly as a Kuyper should, and that that would be best for him, anyway. With which Davidson took issue and left the flat in almost greater ill humor than he had the library of his father.

And after he had gone, Smith, Jones, and Brown asked each other if Kuyper would be capable of doing anything foolish, and all agreed that he would be capable of doing something needlessly, nobly foolish. Thoughts of Kuyper kept Smith awake that night; the thoughts finally wove themselves into a plot, and when he had gone over the main points of the plot carefully, Smith fell asleep with a smile on his face. On the following day the plot was unfolded to Jones and Brown. At first they objected to it on the ground of a possible "devil of a muss," but Smith, who was astute, demonstrated that it was not a plot at all until Kuyper made it one, and that if they called it a plot, then they were conspirators in every acquaintance they effected between a man and a girl.

And this implies that there was a girl in Smith's plot, which there was. She was a very remarkable girl, and Smith, Jones, and Brown had not known her very long, but long enough for each of them to declare that there was a girl who could make a man forget everything and go and be a fool. But it was agreed that there was a girl who wouldn't let a man make a fool of himself and who was altogether too good for any man. Smith's plot—which was not a plot—was the more attractive because it was indisputable that the only man worthy of the girl was Davie, and that she was the only girl in the world worthy of him.

"The virtue of the plot," said Smith, "is that it prevents his marrying some stick for his family's sake, or some working girl or actress for goodness knows who's sake."



"Well, if I loved a shopgirl and she was worth loving," returned Kuyper heatedly, "why, I'd——"

Objection was crushed, and Smith was appointed Lord High Matchmaker and told to go ahead without orders. Brown and Jones were preparing for examinations.

The girl in the plot was Miss Sophronia Redge. She was an orphan; her father had been an Englishman, and her mother an American. She lived with her mother's sister on Long Island Sound. Her paternal uncle was Lord Arkington, an irreclaimable old bachelor, and it happened that upon his death she would succeed to an ancient, if rather impoverished, earldom in the north of England. For, by an act of Par-

liament, the title could pass to a female in lieu of male heirs.

This fact, however, had small effect on the life of Miss Redge. She retained the childish notion that her uncle was immortal; moreover, her aunt kept her out of the shadow of her destiny, partly from an old-fashioned native dislike of English nobility, partly because Lord Arkington had termed her sister an "American hussy" in a letter to his brother in which he said he had in marriage crowned his long-established reputation as a fool.

Sophronia had grown up a rare flower—an exquisite blossom on a strong stalk.

The bloom of her nature was her father's; he had been a lovable failure. The strength of it she owed to her mother's Puritan blood. She had been brought up in America.

Smith's mother had known her mother as a girl in New England. Therefore, he seemed to have known Sophronia all his life. Though he had but recently made her acquaintance, he reckoned much on the previous friendly cousinship, a presumption that the girl accepted cordially.

Smith smoked many pipes and revolved plans. Finally he called on Sophronia and, mentioning Kuyper's name casually, requested that he might bring him to call. Some days later Smith and Kuyper went for a sail on the Sound, and in the afternoon Smith ran the boat up to a pier and suggested that they go ashore and see a girl who would give them something to drink. As they walked up from the water, he told Kuyper a doleful tale of Sophronia's orphanage and comparative poverty.

Miss Redge lived in a small white house amplified with verandas which were walled up with vine leaves. They found her sitting in the luminous shade behind these, with a book. When Kuyper was introduced, she got up and held her hand straight out to him. She was tall and slim and blond. Her hair was brown, turning to gold where it rippled and came down over her forehead near to the eyes. These were blue and very wide open, which gave her the appearance of being startled until you looked at the mouth, which was even and firm, with a suggestion of laughter in the corners. She stood with her hands at her side, the thumbs and forefingers pressed together in an attitude of uncertain expectation. Altogether she was very pretty indeed. But she did not talk like a pretty girl. There was no gasping or extravagant comment, and she had a man's appreciation of the right values of a topic.

Fifteen minutes after their arrival, Kuyper, who at first had sat huddled up with a polite bend at the waist, had thrown a leg over the arm of his low chair and was describing a swimming stroke with animated gestures. Miss Redge knew more about the stroke than Kuyper did. They swam a variety of strokes together. Smith mentally shook hands with himself over the swimming discussion. He ridiculed their enthusiasm and forced them jointly on the defer'�e.

The aunt did not appear; the heat had prostrated her. Smith was on tenterhooks for fear Sophronia might allude to her English connection, but there was no occasion for these disclosures.

When Kuyper could be induced to leave, it was too late to sail the boat back, so they set off for the railroad. Kuyper walked so fast that Smith at times had to run to keep up with him. Kuyper was not himself; usually whimsical and rambling in his talk, now he was either silent or fiercely inquisitive about Miss Redge. He called her "she."

On returning to "Hard Luck Flat," Smith solemnly informed Jones and Brown that the mine was laid and would go off right under Davie and "Lady Sophie." All that they would have to do now would be to stand afar off and listen to the explosion. That evening they could hear Smith chuckling at his desk, and at times he caroled joyously.

Two days later he visited Sophronia with an innocent explanation of why she should leave Kuyper in ignorance of her real position as the Lady Arkington-to-be. But Sophronia's insistent and disconcerting feminine "whys" scattered the explanation, and Smith, driven into a corner, unfolded to her the whole plot. He prayed like a privileged and patriotic courtier that the strange prince—Kuyper—might find favor in the princess'—Sophronia's—eyes. Then he got out of breath and stammered, overcome by his audacity. But Sophronia gasped

not, neither did she blush. She gazed out beyond the garden, and the corners of her mouth smiled.

"His feet are rather large," she observed reflectively. Then she buried her nose in a vase of sweet peas.

Smith returned to the city, alternating between the conviction that he was a fool and that he was a genius.

When Sophronia met Davidson again—it was on a short motor run arranged by Smith—there was no observable change in her manner. They talked like chums. Smith even overheard her describing to Kuyper the reckless poverty of her father. All was well.

But all was not well with Kuyper. He had not been near "Hard Luck Flat" since his first meeting with Miss Redge. Smith learned that since the second meeting he had called on Sophronia six times in thrice as many days. One Thursday night Kuyper came to see Smith, who was alone in the flat. He told Smith that his father had gone to London, where he was to participate in some sort of international memorial. He walked up and down the room a great deal. Apropos of nothing, he said :

"You fellows have it all arranged for me to grow up into a useless, thick-skinned member of society, haven't you? I can't do anything, just because I am so-and-so. That is your infernal idea; but I am going to give you the biggest surprise of your lives pretty soon."

"What are you going to do, Kuyp? Ship before the mast? Or have you picked out a shopgirl?"

Kuyper regarded him fiercely. "You make me so tired," he said, "because you haven't got any sense. I'd like to chuck you and everybody else so far away that I would never see you again."

Finally Kuyper inquired if Smith, Jones, and Brown had anything on for Wednesday following, and on learning they had not, he said, "Ha!" and took

a sudden leave. When he had gone, Smith had to get up and throw some boxing gloves around the room to relieve his feelings.

That night Kuyper sat for four hours in his father's particular chair and smoked his father's particular cigars. At the end of the four hours, he dragged a heavy Bible from a shelf and inspected the entry of his birth in it. Then he went to bed.

The following afternoon he repaired to Sophronia's house on the Sound and they sat in the garden where the cherry blooms strewed the ground like old snow. Sophronia's eyes had more than usual of their startled expression, but her hands lay very still in her lap. When Kuyper asked her to marry him, she was looking out beyond the garden and her lips trembled to a smile. Then she turned and kissed him on the mouth.

That night Sophronia lay on her bed and cried softly into a pillow. Then she sat up and laughed a little, and, going to her writing table, she addressed a letter to Lord Arkington. In it she said that she had promised to marry Davidson Kuyper, son of Caspar Kuyper, of New York, who was then in London. It was a brief and formal document, not unlike the kind she had on rare occasions received from her grandfather's solicitors.

Kuyper disappeared for four days. On Wednesday morning he entered "Hard Luck Flat" without ringing the bell, and said jerkily:

"If you fellows aren't too busy, I'd be glad to have you come downtown. I'm going to get married."

Even Smith was knocked flat by the announcement. He turned to the window and saw two taxicabs at the curb. In one of them a woman's skirts were visible. Brown exclaimed, "Well, hoh-le smoke!" And Jones regarded Kuyper with a scared and imbecile grin. Kuyper presented the appearance of a

man who expects to be thrown down and bound with ropes. He began to shake his head up and down, saying solemnly:

"You won't call me a damned fool. You won't call me a damned fool."

That broke the spell, and they all poured down the stairs. Smith was the first to the taxi. "I knew it, I knew it!" he whispered, as he shook Sophronia's hand. She wore a broad black velvet hat and a thick veil, and looked a princess incog. The two cabs coasted down the avenue, the three conspirators wedged into the rear one.

"Oh, dear, oh, dear!" gasped Smith. "Am I a matchmaker?"

"You can tell the old man," said Jones.

"I'd tell the Czar of Russia," said Smith.

In the sunny library of a rectory in a cross street, Smith, Jones, and Brown stood in a triangle and watched the summation of the plot. Ten minutes later the taxis were off down the avenue



When Kuyper was introduced, she got up and held her hand straight out to him.

again—far down to a roomy old hotel with vines on the balconies. For a few minutes Kuyper was alone with the three in a corner of the office.

"Keep all this dark," he said. "We sail at two. The governor's in London. I'm going straight to him—that is, we are. It's better to have it out there. I think it would kill him to learn of it here." Kuyper was thinking of his father's library. "He can't do more than cut me off, and, if he does, I think I can work. You fellows won't believe that, but I think I can fool you."

"Kuyp," said Smith solemnly, "you're a king. God go with you. There's no doubt, though, it's a serious business. Have you got enough money to come back with?"

"You poor—" began Kuyper, with a laugh, and they went in to luncheon with Sophronia.

Sophronia avoided Smith's eyes. "Isn't it exciting?" she remarked, as she poised her glass of champagne. "We're going to beard the lion in his den." Kuyper frowned and smiled. "I've planned to faint at his feet at the psychological moment," she continued. "Or would it be wiser to let Davidson do the bearding alone and for me to enter at the dramatic instant and stand beside my husband with my hands folded and my eyes cast down? Picture: The Penitents."

Sophronia sipped her wine, her wide eyes reaching soberly to the four faces around her. Smith began to laugh, and they all laughed long, almost hysterically.

Sophronia's letter to her uncle was forwarded to him at his club in London. Lord Arkington read it, tore it up, and threw it away. He resumed his paper, and then put it aside.

"Fool!" he muttered. "Cooper, Keeper—what's the name?" An attendant restored sufficient of the fragments for him to read again the name of Caspar Kuyper. "Caspar Kuyper," droned the nobleman. "Kippered Herring!" He was a purple-faced gentleman. He grew more purple. "It's in the blood," he said to himself. "Why doesn't she say she's going to marry a Chinaman? Kuyper!"

He sent for a club guest list. Then he called a cab, and drove to Brown's Hotel.

Lord Arkington was English. He hated foreigners, and he regarded the American as a peculiarly detestable sort of foreigner—a counterfeit Englishman.

When Mr. Caspar Kuyper received Lord Arkington's card, he presumed that the nobleman was connected with the national memorial. He received him affably. Arkington was breathing hard. He stood inside the door with his gloved hand on his hip.

"You are Caspar Kuyper, eh?" he said. "Well, Mr. Caspar Kuyper, my niece has had the goodness to apprise me that she is going to marry your son. I dare say you are proud of the fact. When you Americans get a taste of blood—ha, ha!—there's no holding you. My niece, sir, is a fool and the daughter of a fool. I wish to inform you that I don't know her. Perhaps she is a lady; perhaps she is not. But I fancy that doesn't make any difference to you. She is the future Lady Arkington and that is enough for you. I congratulate myself that when there is a Lady Arkington, I shall be dead. Good morning, sir."

Lord Arkington strode out of the room, and the elder Kuyper stood staring at the empty doorway.

"That to me! That to *me!*" he exclaimed. Then he sank into a chair and turned over the card, which was still in his hand. "Mad!" he murmured. "Why, it's pitiful!"

The idea was too incredible to be entertained. Davidson engaged to the future Lady Arkington! Why, there was no English girl of possible title in New York that he knew of, and Caspar Kuyper did not reckon on people he did not know. He called for a "Peerage," and, turning to "Arkington," discovered that the heir apparent was one Sophronia Redge. The elder Kuyper experienced a gentle excitement. He dispatched a message of sharp inquiry to his son.

That evening Lord Arkington, who had become steadily more inflamed since his interview with Caspar Kuyper, fell out of his chair at the club with a stroke of apoplexy. He died at nine p. m.

When the elder Kuyper opened the morning paper, the nobleman's death was the first news to meet his eyes. He rubbed his flanks and drank several glasses of whisky and water, which bad breach of custom testified to a "state of mind." Shortly before noon the door opened and his son was ushered into the room. The elder Kuyper jumped to his feet and swore. He let his son shake his hand mechanically.

"Dad," said Davidson, "I have something important to tell you. I wish you would hear me out. I'm married."

"To whom?" asked the elder Kuyper, steady-ing himself with a chair.

"To the finest girl in the world."

"To the Countess of Arkington?"

Davidson scarcely comprehended his father's words.

"To a girl," he said simply, "whom you will love and admire when you know her."

"And she is the Countess of Arkington!" cried Caspar Kuyper.

Davidson thought that

his father was indulging in some ghastly humor.

"No," he said stiffly, "nor the Princess of Wales, either. You need not think I have disgraced you or the name of Kuyper. She did me great honor in taking me. She was poor and obscure, but she will be neither now."

"No, perhaps not," said the old man with a meaning that caused Davidson a peculiar feeling.

"What is—what was her name?"

"Redge—Sophronia Redge."



The elder Kuyper gave Sophronia a long look. "You are my son's wife," he said.

"The Countess of Arkington," added the elder Kuyper. "Why in the name of Heaven do you keep that back?"

Davidson took a step toward his father. "Good God, dad!" he cried. "Don't act like this. Kick me out; disinherit me or anything, but don't joke about it!"

A singular look came over the old man's face.

"Davidson," he said gently, "where is your wife?"

Kuyper left the room for a few moments. When he returned Sophronia preceded him. Her face was serene. While Davidson "bearded the lion," she had been reading the *Times* in the parlor below.

The elder Kuyper gave Sophronia a long look. "You are my son's wife," he said.

"Yes," calmly.

"And you are the Countess of Arkington? You have heard?"

"So it seems," with fluttering breath. Davidson leaned back against the door and closed his eyes.

"And my son married you in the belief that you were a poor and obscure girl?"

"Yes," very low.

The elder Kuyper raised his eyebrows comically. "Well," he said slowly, "considering what a fool he tried to make of himself, it's a pretty good joke on Davidson, isn't it?"

The old man kissed Sophronia on the forehead. She turned and put her arms around Davidson's neck, and, as she bent her head, tears came to them both.

"I don't see it yet," he said.

She told him.

The elder Kuyper had drawn them both inside his arms when Davidson looked up.

"I am a fool!" he said. "A happy fool!"



A Firelight Fancy

THE shadows dance about you in their play
At ancient games with bright elfs of the fire,
And deep within the room's more dusky gray
I watch you, hearthside priestess at her pyre.

So have I watched in æons past, perhaps;
I was your savage mate, you were my queen;
Our youth was nurtured in the wildwood laps;
Our strength on mountain height, in woodland green.

Perhaps we met again in twilight gloom
Of Teuton forest deep, whence sprang the breed
That sent Rome's proudest legions to a tomb
In tangled fens, the gay swamp rose to feed.

How would you smile, if in my dreaming versed!
Yet, as I watch you in the firelight's glow,
It seems as if I learned to love you first
In ages dim—not just a week ago!

ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH.



An Optimistic Pilgrimage

By Allan Updegraff

Author of "The Handicap," "Blue Roses," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY G. W. HARTING

SO!" said Mr. Hult, adjusting his heavy knapsack with a smile and a wriggle that showed it felt good to his shoulders. "So—now we're off!"

Two steps brought him to the door of his room; but he did not open it. Instead, he turned right about and stood with his back against the door, like a soldier at attention.

Like a soldier who has been given the order to march, he started due east toward the clothes press that stood in the corner against the opposite wall. Passing close beside the washstand, he reached the clothes press in four steps.

For a moment the blank brown doors of the press shut off farther progress; but Mr. Hult, cleverly pivoting on one toe, turned due north and marched seven steps, until the northward wall of his room rose before him. There he turned to the west, skirted a big, old-fashioned bureau, and marched four steps to a locked door that ended any hope that he might have of penetrating into the hall bedroom beyond.

But Mr. Hult was not disturbed; with all the good humor of that famous general who marched his soldiers up a hill and then marched down again, he turned right about and marched back, in his footsteps, to the outer door.

He paused to make a pencil mark on a bit of paper tacked to the back of the door, repeated the march he had just finished, made another mark, and set out again.

The lowered gas jet flickered, and its reflection flickered in the mirror of the ancient bureau it projected beside. A light wind, moist, sweetish, and in some occult way carrying a hint of spring in spite of its passage of city roofs, fluttered the dingy lace curtains at the two northward windows. The rumble of a dray on the cobblestones outside made Mr. Hult's shaving mug rattle softly on the marble top of the washstand. And Mr. Hult marched.

His marching equipment was complete and wonderful. The large canvas knapsack bulged with shapes that might have accounted for most of the bric-a-brac from his room, as well as several pairs of old shoes; his new khaki clothes neatly outlined his swelling German figure, and a corduroy cap, with bills before and behind—such as used always to be pictured on the heads of gentlemen who had just scaled a famous Alp—combined with his large-eyed Teutonic face and his drooping, horseshoe-shaped mustache in a distinguished way. Yellow leggings called attention to his solid

calves. His shoes were of bright yellow leather, stiff, new, and enormous, and hobnailed, judging by the solid way in which they settled into the carpet at every step. A large pipe, with a bowl like an egg cup and a stem like a small branch from a cherry tree, seemed to serve him somewhat as the smokestack serves a locomotive. He puffed and pondered, and marched, and chalked up each thirty steps on the paper tacked to his outer door.

Once, for a brief period, Mr. Fred-
eric Augustine Hult had been a per-
son of importance; but that had been
many years before, in his native town of
Hanover. It had started in his great
peaceableness; the very idea of war,
the mere expression of jingoism, was
enough to make him forget himself. On
the occasion that gave him prominence,
he had been disturbed by the pugnacity
of the German emperor. In his excite-
ment, he had stated that Wilhelm was a
"windbag," a "war lord who'd be bet-
ter employed in raising turnips," a "hot-
air balloon who ought to be punctured
with one of his own bayonets"—and
probably would be if he persisted in try-
ing to bring on an Anglo-German mur-
der match.

It was, of course, unfortunate that
Mr. Hult could not appreciate the beau-
ties of war like a German and a gentle-
man; but was there any reason why the
reigning Hohenzollern should be made
to suffer for that? Certainly not. Sev-
eral of Mr. Hult's friends, recognizing
this, hurried him onto a train for Ham-
burg; very much to the disappointment
of two uniformed gentlemen who called
at his lodgings the next morning to dis-
cuss the political situation with him.
Although they followed him to the
steamship pier, they arrived some min-
utes too late to dissuade him from going
to America.

In the several hard years before he
became established as a bookkeeper in a
Broome Street woolen house, Mr. Hult

sometimes wished he had stayed for the
interview with the uniformed gentle-
men; at least he would have had some-
thing to eat, and a place to sleep. How-
ever, as he frequently told himself, all
things pass. Of late years, what with
his comfortable position and only an oc-
casional game of pinochle and a convi-
vial stein or two to break the monotony,
life had been growing almost too
peaceful and quiet, even for him.

There was a gentle knock at his door.

Mr. Hult fell into confusion, as at
the unexpected appearance of an enemy.
He waited, standing firm by the wash-
stand, to make sure. The knock was
repeated, nearer, clearer, louder than
before.

Mr. Hult hastily took off his cap and
knapsack, pushed them in at one end
of the washstand, and went to the door.
He opened it a crack and peered out.

"Wat is it?" he asked.

"If you don't mind, Mr. Hult," said
a firm, feminine voice, "I'd like to speak
to you a moment."

"Sure—that is all right!" agreed Mr.
Hult, guarding his crack and glancing
hastily around, as if for reinforcements.
"Wat is it, Mrs. Brill?"

The door was slowly but definitely
pushed back toward Mr. Hult; he gave
ground before superior force.

"Yes—certainly—please come in!" he
said, when the intention of the invader
was sufficiently manifest. He stepped
back, shooting an uncomfortable glance
at the place where he had half concealed
his knapsack and hat.

"Thank you," said Mrs. Brill pleas-
antly, and entered.

She was large, erect, full-bosomed,
and very blond, and there was an air
of freshness, of good humor, of un-
daunted vitality and common sense
about her. As she entered, she showed
her general appraisal of Mr. Hult by a
gentle, rather superior, but comfortably
pleasant smile. Then she noticed his



"Why—I just wanted to speak to you—in a friendly way," she said, "about—your walking, you know."

soldierly attire, and the impedimenta stacked by the washstand.

"Whatever are you up to?" she asked, with a flash of white teeth and an amused twinkle of blue eyes.

Mr. Hult was put upon his mettle.

"Please sit down, Mrs. Brill," he said. "Vat vas it you vished to speak to me about, please?"

He pushed forward a yellowed wicker rocker, and seated himself stiffly in a straight-backed chair before her. Mrs. Brill looked apologetic.

"Why—I just wanted to speak to you—in a friendly way," she said, "about—your walking, you know."

Mr. Hult nodded, hands on knees, dignified and contemplative.

"Aw, say, now—look here!" she protested, with a quick rush of humor to her mouth and eyes. "Please don't go getting your back up! But there's been complaints from the couple downstairs. They said the other night you walked till one o'clock." She glanced down at Mr. Hult's Gargantuan feet. "Couldn't you just change your shoes—slippers after ten o'clock?" she asked. She chuckled in a natural, whole-hearted way that shook her from the waist up. "Besides, it would be a lot easier on the carpet!"

Mr. Hult followed her eyes to his course of march; there was a path on the dark-red carpet, a lighter-colored path marking his itinerary. In front of the bureau his vigor had so worn a seam in the carpet that it was beginning to gape. He was surprised and regretful.

"I have not thought, Mrs. Brill," he said. "Yes, you are right. I valk here-after in my slippers."

She apologized. "You know I wouldn't hurt your feelings? You're about my oldest and steadiest roomer, I guess—and I wouldn't want to interfere with your personal liberty to take a stroll in the evenings!" she finished, amused once more.

But there was a soothing, confidential

quality about her amusement, as if she had covered it with velvet before handing it out. Although, as a general rule, Mr. Hult did not like levity, he warmed to Mrs. Brill's; it was comfortable and friendly, and went well with the rest of her.

"Sure—that is all right; I am but practicing," he explained. "You understand, I practice for a long valk—for a *wanderjahr*!"

"A walking trip?" she asked, interested.

Mr. Hult became very grave lest he should show too much joy in the opportunity she had given him to talk about his plans.

"Sure," he said, with solemnity. "In three weeks comes my vacation. A doctor I go to for pains in my digestion tells me to get exercise. So I say to myself, I take a *wanderjahr*—I valk, I explore! Who knows vat I shall find?"

His enthusiasm burst out in a regal wave of his hand, in an excited widening of his large gray eyes.

"Well, and what do you expect to find?" asked Mrs. Brill. If she was moved by his enthusiasm, she was still practical as to details.

Mr. Hult thought a moment. "The great Goethe," he said, slowly and impressively, "says that the two greatest things to find are a buried treasure and to fall in love. If a man keeps his eyes open, Mrs. Brill, who knows vat he finds?"

"Oh—I think you're great!" she said, laughing in a way that smoothed Mr. Hult by including him in the joke. He smiled, feeling the sympathetic interest behind her amusement. He was a bit troubled by the amusement—he didn't see why she should be amused—but the sympathetic interest caressed his lonely soul.

"Sometimes here I valk five miles in an evening," he told her.

"But I should think you'd practice on the sidewalks?" suggested Mrs. Brill.

He shook his head. "I try it vonce," he said, "but I attract too much attention. Of course, ven I get out in the country vere there are no people, that happens not so much. Ah, it vill be good—along the open roads, among the birds and the green trees, Mrs. Brill. I ku-vote Heine as I walk along—*Klinge, kleine Frühlingslied*— Ach, I dream of it!"

"Well—I think you're great!" she repeated, laughing in a softer tone and looking at him as if she had just seen him for the first time. "You must have a fine lot of imagination, I should say!"

"Ya—some," he admitted, soberly puffing his pipe.

They were silent for a little time, but Mrs. Brill showed no sign of being in a hurry to go. She looked at Mr. Hult with frank interest, frank amusement, and frank liking; and Mr. Hult, getting the general trend of her attitude, raised her, and rose, in his own estimation.

"Also I shall talk with the people I meet," he said. "I talk to them against tyranny, and against kings. I find out vat they think, and exchange vat I think. In an office, there are strict rules; a man cannot talk much. But on my *wanderjahr*—I can talk!"

"But we haven't got any kings in this country, you know," suggested Mrs. Brill.

"Ach, there are kings and kings!" declared Mr. Hult; "although I do say that the old-country kind are the vorst! Mrs. Brill, I am born a German, but I must say the German emperor is the vorst of all kings. It has not been his fault ve have not seen England and Germany killing each other! I hope for better peace," he finished philosophically, "under the crown prince, ven he comes to the throne."

"Is the German emperor so very bad?" asked Mrs. Brill.

Mr. Hult seized, like the suppressed soul he was, upon the interest thus disclosed in international politics. He de-

nounced Wilhelm in a pet speech that he had often begun, but seldom, as now, been allowed to finish; and ended by giving an account of his own abrupt departure for America. He had never forgiven Wilhelm for that—even though he liked America.

"Well, you've certainly had an interesting life!" said Mrs. Brill, rising from the willow rocker and smoothing her dress down over her straight front as a sign of impending departure. "I never imagined you were so well educated, either. How little we know about people till we get talking with them!"

"It is so few people, like yourself, that have thoughts in their heads to talk about!" said Mr. Hult, referring to the fact that she had proved a stimulating listener. "I would like to talk to you often, Mrs. Brill. It is true, vat you say—I never imagined it of you, either!"

"Drop down in the front room sometimes," said Mrs. Brill, with chirky friendliness. "Lola and I are generally alone in the evenings."

Mr. Hult turned pink for pleasure. "Ah, she is a fine child—a fine little girl, your little daughter, Mrs. Brill!" he said, placing his compliments instinctively where he knew they would be most appreciated. "I have often wished to become better acquainted with her. The society of the young is—is fine for those who begin to see years behind them!"

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Brill warmly. "I don't know what I'd ever have done without her, Mr. Hult!"

He shook his head, deeply moved by these intimacies, and escorted her to the door.

"I hope you find your buried treasure!" she said, and chuckled as she turned down the stairs. But Mr. Hult was not in the least irritated.

"A fine woman, an understanding woman! Ach, how soft flaxen her hair is!" he told himself as he took off his



"Say," she added, as he hesitated, "are you really thinking of parading around the country in that —that outfit you had on the other night?"

heavy shoes. With an old pair of leather slippers flapping below his leggings, he marched until he had chalked up two hundred marks on the paper tacked to his door.

"Over a mile—it is enough to-night!" he concluded, and contentedly went to bed.

Mr. Hult's discovery of a person, like Mrs. Brill, with thoughts in her

head to talk about resulted in a considerable saving of the carpet in his room. He still marched much and often; but every day or so he found something in his evening newspaper that required discussion, and after that discussion there were other discussions to keep him lingering in the big, comfortable front room that Mrs. Brill kept for herself and her daughter.

Her original attitude of amused, somewhat condescending friendliness underwent a change with acquaintance. Mr. Hult's soaring imagination fascinated her. The high-handed way in which he dealt with the troubled European continent, leaping from denunciations of Emperor Wilhelm to his hope that the crown prince might be more peaceably minded, and thence to a dream of universal brotherhood, interested her, but called for a lot of practical objections to the nebulous theories he rejoiced in. Frequently her common sense brought him back to earth; sometimes he succeeded in convincing her, and these last were great moments in his eyes.

His master stroke was when he readily untangled a sentence in the "Beginner's Latin Book" that was among Lola's chief afflictions.

After that Mr. Hult had a new incentive to stop in the front room as he came in from his evening meal. If there were any tangles in Miss Lola's Latin lesson, he would just attend to them before he went upstairs. Mrs. Brill's life, in the lengthening years of her widowhood, had turned inward around her daughter, and Mr. Hult's real interest in the child was not only the surest path to Mrs. Brill's consideration, but a widener for her own life as well. As for Mr. Hult, even her perplexing levity, even her disturbing love of a joke, was not enough to dampen his pleasure in the society of the front room. Within two weeks his practice marches were confined to the evenings when he felt that Mrs. Brill did not want him around.

"Oh, I noticed something in the paper this evening that might interest you," she told him one evening, as he stood in the doorway, ceremoniously bowing himself out.

He judged, with joy, that he had been hasty in deciding he ought to go; he returned a few steps.

"So?" he said, smiling at the pleasant prospect of a discussion.

Mrs. Brill glanced up over the carpet rags she was sewing together. "Yes. It said the German crown prince has made a great speech in favor of war. He's so much more scrappy than Emperor Wilhelm that it's a shame!"

Mr. Hult jerked back his head, as if the crown prince's scrappy proclivities had been a clenched fist under his nose. His smile turned sick and withdrew; his face rapidly became pink, then reddish. Indignation stifled a reply, stifled even the formation of remarks to express his feelings.

There was only one light in the room, a red-shaded oil lamp on the table beside which Mrs. Brill was working, and she did not see the wrath she had aroused.

"He seems to be just spoiling for a fight," she said, and chuckled as she resumed her sewing.

Mr. Hult put one hand to his throat; his large eyes blinked rapidly. Humor at such a moment was frightful; but Mrs. Brill did not understand. He turned slowly toward the door, choking down his torrential rage.

"Off for a practice march?" she asked. Lola had gone to a children's party, and her voice said she'd be glad of company. "Say," she added, as he hesitated, "are you really thinking of parading around the country in that—that outfit you had on the other night?"

Mr. Hult, gasping a little, turned around and stood in the doorway. He had striven with himself to accept her sense of humor as a part of herself, not to be explained. If she could find only amusement in the devastating bloodthirstiness of the Hohenzollerns, father and son, he would endeavor to understand. Besides, she had asked him a question.

"Yes, that is my intention," he said, striving to put international politics be-

hind and look to the matter that was before. "Vy do you ask, Mrs. Brill?"

"Well—I bet you get arrested!" she said, beginning to chuckle.

He was stormed by various lively emotions, but he repulsed them.

"Please explain to me," he said, calm as an owl.

Mrs. Brill explained, amused but considerate. "Why, it's so unusual. Folks will notice it—and you'll attract a lot more attention in the country than you did even in New York!" Her amusement began to get the better of her consideration. "Why, you'll start a young riot in the first town you come to! If you had any sense of humor, you'd see——"

"My sense of humor, Mrs. Brill——" he began.

But she was overcome by recollections. "That cap!" she interrupted; "that cap, with the bills fore and aft—where on earth did you dig up that cap?"

"I took a great deal of trouble to get that cap," said Mr. Hult softly, because he was threatening to choke.

She dropped her hands in her lap and laughed outright. "Sure you did!" she cried. "It looks it!" She softened her laughter to chuckles, although the effort made her shake all over, and bent, red-faced, over her work again. "Excuse me!" she apologized. "But you know you're awfully funny—as well as awfully fine in so many ways. I s'pose most people wouldn't see anything but the funny side. Now most people coming in and finding you marching around your room—all got up in your leggings and big shoes and everything—well, they'd have thought you—you weren't just right!"

Mr. Hult was unable to say a word; his face turned a deep violet-red, his eyes stuck out as if by force of inward pressure, his eyelids opened and shut with explosive rapidity.

"And then your talk about finding a

buried treasure," continued Mrs. Brill, complacently sewing carpet rags. "I'd say you were just as likely to find a hidden treasure right in your room as anywhere else! Why don't you look around? Under your carpet, say. I'll bet——"

"Mrs. Brill, please to cease to speak your nonsense!" he burst out, suddenly fiery and voluble with his wrongs. "Because country *dummkopfs*, and other *dummkopfs*, laugh—is it any reason I do not dress as is fitting for a *wander-jahr*? I walk my room around, ya——"

"Oh, say—please wait a minute!" interrupted Mrs. Brill, alarmed and sorry.

But the gates of Mr. Hult's explanations were opened. He waved both his arms in the air. "Because I walk around my room, carrying always a heavy knapsack, I have myself cured of pains in my digestion!" he thundered. "And so I lose already eleven pounds and harden my physical so it has not been so full of muscles in ten, fifteen *jahr*! And ven I say——"

"Please, Mr. Hult——"

"And ven I say I perhaps find a hidden treasure, I speak *poetry*!" roared Mr. Hult, rolling his eyes in a fine frenzy. "I ku-vote you the great Goethe, and you do not understand! I no longer shall your amusement tolerate! Please to remember it, Mrs. Brill!"

He marched out of the room at double-quick; up the stairs and into his own room he strode, and lit the gas. He was puffing with exercise and wrath. He had never been half so enraged in his life; not even when Kaiser Wilhelm had declared that Germans should always be ready to fight anybody, had he been half so enraged.

For a moment he glared about him, seeking some further outlet for the Vesuvius still erupting in his bosom. A glimpse of his despised marching paraphernalia, hanging on the back of his closet door, gave him an inspiration.

Fiercely he divested himself of his

business clothes and put on the equipment that he had prepared to wear on his pilgrimage. The big yellow shoes, with their soles like planks, he furiously donned and laced with jerks that threatened even their buckskin thongs. His knapsack, weighty with pincushions and a bronze deer and three China vases rolled in trousers and numerous old shoes, he strapped about his shoulders. With trembling fingers he tacked a fresh sheet of paper on the door, left the door a little ajar so that his rebellion would be more plain, and began to march.

"So—let her come and forbid me!" he rumbled, striding along the streak in the carpet that his feet had worn. "I will go—so! I go, never to return! She will have it hard to get another roomer so steady as myself!"

He marched, chalking up his tally on the door and listening for the sound of Mrs. Brill's footsteps on the stairs. He advertised his rebellion; his tramping shook the house. There was a boyishness about his wrath, a simplicity and a naïveté that went with the rest of him. He blew out his chest, and sank his hobnails in the carpet, and took no pains to avoid the ripping seam in front of the bureau. In his recent marches he had been careful to step across this seam; but now he was ready to fight anybody.

His armored toe caught in the rip, and down he went with all the force of his fiery double-quick.

"So?" he said, sitting up and rubbing a place on his shin that had come in collision with a hobaile heel. "So?"

He looked forlornly up at the flickering gas jet, turned low, as always, so that the people across the street might not see him at his marching. He looked about the flickering gloom of his room. His wrath had evaporated as suddenly as it had arisen.

He got up and limped over to the yellowed wicker rocker. Noticing that his door was ajar, he arose and went and listened at the crack. There was

no sound of protest from the front room. In some ways, this was a disappointment; in others, a satisfaction.

"Now there is a wise woman," said Mr. Hult, closing the door and returning to his chair. "She does not oppose a fool in his folly, nor an angry man in his wrath."

With returning philosophy, he became repentant and miserable.

"It was all the fault of those Hohenzollerns!" said Mr. Hult. "*Donnerwetter!* Do I never escape them? I come to America—I get a good job—I fall in love mit—mit—mit de finest—" He choked.

Presently he got up and began soberly getting out of his marching outfit. He hung the things in the rear of his closet, and there was a definiteness about the process. He shook his head over them and sighed; they belonged to the past.

"She was right!" he told himself, and got into his everyday clothes. "I am a big fool!"

For a time he sat in the wicker rocker, full of thoughts and sighs. Occasionally he let fall a phrase that showed the process of his mind—he was framing an apology.

There was a gentle knock at his door.

He sprang up, hope and doubt rippling over his face, went to the door, and opened it wide. Mrs. Brill was standing in the dimly lit hall outside.

"I want to apologize, Mr. Hult!" she said hurriedly; she looked very serious, even a little scared. "I didn't have any excuse to talk to you like I did—and I don't blame you a bit for—"

"Ach—it is I who should apologize!" interrupted Mr. Hult, looking at her with humbleness and peace thick upon him. "Please come in!" He stepped aside, holding back the door for her and bowing as at the entrance of an empress. "It was all those Hohenzollerns!" he protested. "Vat you tell me, you know—"



"So—and vat these are—just a kind of a joke?"

"But I didn't have any business to—to jolly you like that!" she insisted, humble with real regret. She came in, not holding herself quite so erect as usual, and allowed him to seat her in the rocker. Mr. Hult, momentous with the crisis that confronted them, sat down before her.

"Please, vill you excuse me for my temper?" he pleaded, leaning forward like one who seeks an ambassadorship at least. "I deeply request it!"

Mrs. Brill smiled a little. "Oh, I admire a man that's got spunk enough to make a row when he's treated badly!" she said. "I ought to have remembered you didn't like jokes. I'm awfully sorry, and I hope—"

"I *love* your jokes!" insisted Mr. Hult. "I am only stupid—I do not understand. I am perhaps deficient in a sense of humor, Mrs. Brill, and I ask your indulgence this time. In the future, you will find me easier to comprehend." This last was from the speech of apology he had been preparing when interrupted, and he delivered it in one breath. Mrs. Brill was impressed.

"Oh, you've got a lot of better things than a sense of humor," she said, with cheerful admiration.

Mr. Hult was so melted by the beamy look on her face that he had nothing to say. His reply went to his eyes; they took on a rapt, vacant look as of the beginning of a great aspiration. Solemnly he rubbed the sore place on his shin.

"Did you—have a fall?" she asked, all sympathy and friendliness.

"A leetle stumble," admitted Mr.

Hult, glancing shamefacedly toward the place of his late debacle. "I just—"

He broke off and leaned sidewise on his chair, staring. He had ripped the torn seam into a gaping hole! But it wasn't merely the hole that held him tight in the attitude of a dog about to snap at a fly buzzing about its nose—it was something disclosed by the hole.

"Oh, never mind that—I can fix it tomorrow," said Mrs. Brill, hastily getting up and turning toward the door. "Now won't you just come down in the front parlor for a little while—until Lola gets home?"

But Mr. Hult was already on his way over to the hole. He stooped and lifted something, a yellow bill, shaped and engraved like a bank note, and \$50 was stamped in the middle of it. "*Ach, du lieber!*" he gasped, stooped, and picked up two more.

Mrs. Brill, much flustered, went over to him. "Oh—just something that was left under the carpet," she said. "Here, let me—"

"It is a fortune—it is a hidden treasure!" gasped Mr. Hult, stooping and seizing other bills until he had a dozen in his hands. "Ach—see! I march them out of the carpet! I find a hidden treasure—so, right under my nose! So—you remember vat I say about Goethe and—"

"Here—let me see!" interrupted Mrs. Brill, looking pink and uncomfortable. Mr. Hult readily handed them over to her, and dived for more. "Ach, count them!" he cried. "Remember vat you say—how I find a hidden treasure in my room as soon as anyvhere else? So now ve find—"

"Wait—look here!" interrupted Mrs. Brill, in a considerable flutter of excitement, but still very determined. She reached over to turn up the flickering gas jet beside the bureau, and then she reached down for Mr. Hult.

He came up, clutching half a dozen more. "Is it that perhaps the whole

carpet is covered beneath with them!" he stammered. "See—already I—"

"Now don't get excited—just read that!" she said, forcing one of the bills under his eyes, where the light fell full upon it. He blinked and gasped and read:

YOU SAVE MANY OF THESE BY
TRADING AT KALB'S GROCERY.

"So—vat—vat—" murmured Mr. Hult, seizing the bill and turning it over and over in his hands. The enticing suggestion about Kalb's Grocery covered half of the side not devoted to the engraving and the "\$50."

"You see—it's just an advertising dodge," explained Mrs. Brill, a little shaky behind her apparent disgust. "They give out these things so people will read their advertisement. See—it doesn't look much like a real bill even on the face."

Mr. Hult stood holding one of the bills stretched between his two hands, appalled that it could be so deceptive, so double-faced. "I never saw a real vone," he admitted. "So—and vat these are—just a kind of a joke?"

"Something like"—Mrs. Brill's voice caught, and she hurriedly cleared her throat—"something like that," she said. "Now let's forget about them—and you come down and talk to me till Lola gets back."

But Mr. Hult lingered beneath the gas jet, overcome with perplexity and pain by those jocular yellow bills. He stroked the thin hair back from his forehead and swallowed several times.

"I—I am hard to see jokes!" he said, scratching his chin. "You know, Mrs. Brill, I pick up those—those jokes—and I think—like a flash—how the great Goethe said—"

Mrs. Brill, much distressed, took him gently by the arm. "Please don't—don't be worried about them," she pleaded.

Carefully Mr. Hult removed her

hand, her large, capable hand, from his arm and held it in both his own.

"I think to myself," he told her, with quavers in his voice, "the two great things to find are a buried treasure and to fall in love. And now, I think, I find the treasure! Ach—I have already found to fall in love; and how good it would do my heart to bring to you a buried treasure also!"

Mrs. Brill broke into a queer combination of chuckles and catchy little sobs. "Excuse me—I just can't help it!" she begged, coming close to Mr. Hult's shoulder to hide her face from him. "I'm sorry—I put those things there—

I thought you'd find them—and it would be a good joke! I'm sorry—I wouldn't have hurt you—you've been so kind and good——"

Mr. Hult barely retained presence of mind enough to put his arms around her and allow her to cry a little on his shoulder; his face was a blank.

But it was blank only for a moment.

"Ach—I see—you make a joke for me!" He patted her head, seeming suddenly to realize that it was on his shoulder, and relaxed into sprightliness and smiles. "*Ach, du liebchen—I love your jokes!* Ach—already I become entirely one feeling of joy!"



The Midas Month

LEMON-YELLOW is the glint
Of the maples up the street;
Gorgeous poplar leaves—no mint
Might their shining coin repeat!
Pumpkins that have sucked the sun
Through their tight and yellow skins
At the shop doors cumber one
As this Midas month begins.

Midas? Yes; they taught it me:
Once a monarch had a touch
Gilding all so lavishly
That it gilded overmuch.
This November, though, with heat,
Haze, and frostwork, has but made
Gold beneficent and sweet
Everywhere its foot has strayed.

And, though gold were less in sight,
Dear one, could I call you mine,
All my world would still grow bright
With a golden gleam divine.
There's a Midas still about
Just as opulent and bold;
Love—a sovereign still, no doubt—
Touches life, and *all* is gold!

RHEEM DOUGLAS.

The Rest Farm

By Hildegarde Lavender

Author of "For the Rainy Day," "The Elimination of Age," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON GRANT

WHEN her husband died, her friends sighed and looked at one another with a look that meant, "Of course, she ought to be thankful to be rid of him—the wretched failure that he was! But what is she going to live on? Poor, poor Polly! What a mistake her marriage was! And it lasted just long enough to spoil her for taking up any work. She's forty now; the world has passed by, and she's too settled to learn anything new. What's the poor thing going to do?"

Then they spoke vaguely of life insurance. Had the wretched failure who had dragged Polly from one unsuccesst to another during a fifteen-year journey had the forethought to provide for her by insuring his life? The answer gradually filtered out to her acquaintances—he had taken out a life-insurance policy, but he had allowed the last premium to go unpaid. Polly would not have a cent from that—and every one said that it was exactly like him, the blundering, inefficient creature! And, they concluded, no matter how penniless she might be, Polly was certainly better off without him than with him.

Had he left her anything? Nothing but that mortgaged farm on which they had gone to live a few years ago—that last of all his bubbles! Did Polly's friends remember how sure he had been that he could raise early garden stuff for the New York market? And how he had sunk all his available capital in the mere land, and had left himself

nothing with which to buy implements to work it? How he had acted like the shortsighted creature he always was, in short? And all Polly's friends joyously remembered, and vilified the late Mr. Polly, and gradually forgot all about him and her problems.

As for Polly, she looked, at forty, out there upon the mortgaged little Long Island farm, as one would expect the wife and widow of a failure to look—pale, sad-eyed, unexpectant. She had never cared much for the country, but she had no alternative but to live in it. If she sold the farm, it would bring her in so little money that any investment she might make would not pay her house rent. Here she had at least a roof to cover her, a vegetable garden from which she could extract the chief part of her living. And, after she had declined the half-grudging invitations of her brothers and sisters to come and make her home with them, and had caught their irrepressible look of relief as she declined, she set herself to the consideration of what to do with her life and her property.

She was not deeply interested in the matter at first, for, incomprehensible as it would have seemed to her friends, she was occupied in missing her "wretched failure" sorely, poignantly. For she and he had known some faintly gilded hours of happiness together, and the memory of them was sweet and bitter in Polly's lonely heart.

It was that tenderness, perhaps, as

much as the commercial considerations, that decided her to keep the farm; he had always believed in it, lucklessly as he had mismanaged it. She wanted to justify his faith; she wanted his last unfortunate investment to redeem his memory from failure. She considered and considered. But it was chance, not consideration, that finally evolved a means of making the farm a success.

Polly had gone up to town in her mourning, which, not having been of good quality in the beginning, soon showed signs of dinginess. And she had met one of her girlhood acquaintances—a woman who was still teaching in the school in which Polly had been teaching fifteen years before, when the failure had wooed her and won her to pursue his path of unsuccess. And Polly's old friend looked tired.

"Come home with me," said Polly. "It's Friday afternoon—you don't have to be back until Sunday night or Monday morning. And it will do you good. It's quiet—you may stay in bed and sleep until time to come back, if you want to."

The old friend hesitated. "That would be a pretty way to act when visiting!" she demurred.

"Oh, nonsense!" said Polly. "I'm not in a mood for entertaining any more than you are in a mood to be entertained. I'm asking you down literally to sleep. Do come."

"Well—" acquiesced the friend, beginning on a quaver of uncertainty and swelling to decision. And they went.

Polly put her tired school-teacher to bed in a dimly lit little room that smelled sweet with salty air from the bay a mile away, and with lavender and rose leaves. The bed was very comfortable; the sheets were cool and delicious to the touch. There were no noises but the murmur of the wind in the coarse-needled pines outside the bedroom window. There was an old fireplace in the room, with old hand-wrought irons in it, and

a little fire laid ready for lighting. The next morning, when the teacher awoke to the drip of the rain on the roof and in the pines, Polly was making a little blaze on the hearth. She had placed a breakfast tray on the stand by the bedside.

"Don't get up unless you want to," she said, "or until you want to."

"You're an angel, Polly," said the teacher, with a full-breathed sigh of contentment, attacking her toast and beach-plum marmalade. "Why do you do it for me?"

And Polly's lips twitched a little as she answered brusquely: "Oh, I like to have some one to do something for."

The teacher did not arise until late Sunday forenoon, when she donned outdoor garments and went exploring the woods by herself. She brought home with her an appetite, a color, and a bunch of arbutus. And she carried back to the city not only renewed vigor, but the germ of an idea.

"Won't you let Mabel Golightly come down and stay with you over Sunday as you did me?" she wrote to Polly before the end of the next week. "Of course, an out-of-town hotel would be out of the question for her. In the first place, it would cost too much—you know what our salaries are! And in the second place, there's nothing restful about their atmosphere. Do let her come—for a consideration."

Polly thought it would be a good thing for her to have "some one to do something for" that Sunday. And Mabel Golightly came—at the cost of two dollars to herself for board—and drank in refreshment, rest, and sleep in copious drafts.

"I'd give anything if I could come next Sunday and bring my sister. She's teaching voice placing at Miss Dorr's and she gets so tired. It's awful work; those New York girls have the vocal organs of steam calliope, Fanny says. But—it would be too much to ask,



She looked as one would expect the wife and widow of a failure to look. 451

wouldn't it?" she ended, asking with her eyes the favor that her lips disclaimed.

"No," said Polly, "it's not too much to ask. I think I should like to have you and your sister. Would you rather have two separate rooms, or one room with two beds?"

Thus casually, almost unnoticeably, there opened before Polly the way not only to make a living, but to justify the failure's happy belief that, having the farm, she could never know abject want.

Mabel Golightly and her sister Fanny arrived with a third friend in tow—they had telegraphed Polly for permission to bring her. And their sleep on Friday night was long, deep, and delicious, and their breakfasts, served in bed at nine o'clock on Saturday, were appetizing, despite their simplicity. And the young women arose and went down to the beach for the forenoon, and came home to a buffet luncheon in the immaculate dining room at which they did not see their hostess, but helped themselves, from the ice chest, to cold meat and cheese and fruit, and made themselves tea over the alcohol lamp on the side table, all according to directions left by the invisible Polly. They had paper napkins and wooden platters for this picnic.

Then they rested a while in their pretty, bare, restful rooms, and then they explored the woods, and then they came home to dinner with Polly—a new Polly, with a vague flush of hope and purpose on her thin cheeks, and a light in her sad eyes. And the dinner was perfect, as only those dinners are to which the guests bring wonderful appetites and the hostess the personal supervision of the cooking. There was no service, for Polly kept no servants; but there was a mahogany "lazy Susan" in the center of the table, and there was a wheeled tea wagon by Polly's side; and by a judicious management of these

two mechanical assistants, the meal passed off happily. And the next day was like the first.

At the close of the second day, Polly advanced upon her paying guests with a tremulous air of excitement, and handed them some little cards that she had had struck off. They stated that a limited number of week-end guests could be accommodated at "Rest Farm."

"Do you think any one will want to come?" asked Polly, with lips that would not keep steady, despite her desperate biting of them.

"Want to!" cried the trio. "But of course you must raise your price. That is a ridiculous little bit you ask."

"But I want to start the thing chiefly for women like you—women who need a bit of change and who haven't the money for a long journey, or for hotel expenses. I want to feel that I am doing something for them as well as letting them do something for me," confessed Polly.

"You'll be doing plenty for them if you charge them two dollars a day apiece. How many have you room for?" demanded the practical Fanny Golightly, in a perfectly well-placed voice.

"Five. I have three rooms for single guests and one double room," answered Polly merrily.

"That's twenty dollars a week the weeks you are full. It's mighty little for all that you do," grumbled Miss Golightly.

"No, it isn't," contradicted Polly. "You see, I don't keep a household servant, and I don't intend to. I mean, if this rest-farm idea works out, to have everything as simple as it is at present. I shall take people only for the weekends—of course, I couldn't take them for all the week and do all the work myself. But taking them only from Friday night until Sunday night gives me a long rest between batches, and I can do the work alone. The vegetables I raise myself, and the eggs, and the milk



GORDON GRANT
14

"Mrs. Polly, could you not let us have a dozen of your fresh eggs to carry back with us?"

and butter. All the preserves and marmalades I make myself. I do my own bread making, and all my own cooking.

But it's all awfully simple—of course, it's bound to be, at that price. No deserts but jellies and cheese, or fruit and

cheese. Only three courses for dinner—soup, or oysters, or clams; fish or meat, not fish *and* meat, with vegetables; salad—cheese, fruit, and coffee. That's a simple dinner, and one that I can prepare without exhausting myself, and serve without confusion. The question is—are there enough professional women in New York who would care for such a very plain—such an almost austere—week-end?"

"Are there?" chorused the week-end guests, in unmistakable reply. "You'll be swamped—overrun."

"No, I shan't be, for I have only room for five—or, at a pinch, six. And I'm not going to enlarge my plant. Running it this way, you see, I can run it alone and save myself no end of cost and worry in servants. If I enlarged, I should have to have help, and that would eat up my profits. And besides, I want only the class of people whom simplicity attracts; there are plenty of hotels and board-walk resorts for the rest of the world!"

"But how about all the hundreds of working women in New York who will want to come when they learn about this rest farm of yours? Aren't you going to take pity on them?"

"No," answered Polly. "But the idea is not copyrighted, you know, and if this venture proves a success, any number of imitators may spring up—I hope they will!" she added generously.

That was the beginning of the rest farm, which went on its destined way according to Polly's plans. From Monday until Friday she was as lonely as she desired to be; she had ample leisure for her work, her reading, her music. From Friday until Monday she was as busy as possible, but not too busy for her health or enjoyment. Rigidly she kept the standard of the rest farm

where she had first set it—at perfect plainness, wholesomeness, and at no elegance save that of a fine simplicity. She received no guests except those introduced by acquaintances. Her Saturday and Sunday night dinner-table talk kept her in touch with a hundred things of which she would never have heard but for her enterprise.

But these cheerful results were not the sum total of the good accomplished for Polly by the farm. It soon became the custom for departing guests to say beseechingly: "Mrs. Polly, please, ma'am, could you not let us have a dozen of your fresh eggs to carry back with us? Or a jar of your beach-plum marmalade, or some of your wonderful scones? And oh, Mrs. Polly, ma'am, could you tell us where you get your wonderful bacon and ham—Not really! You don't really smoke them yourself? Could you—couldn't you—wouldn't you—let us have a side of bacon, or a ham?"

And Mrs. Polly, while rigidly adhering to her determination to employ no household servants, employed more farm hands, and built up for herself that desideratum of every farmer—a direct-purchasing clientele, independent of commission merchants. And the mortgage was lifted and the manager of the local branch bowed with unction when Mrs. Polly passed into his portals. And her brothers and sisters said that Polly had always had ability, and that she would have amounted to a great deal but for her unfortunate marriage. And Polly, congratulated upon her success, always answered with lips that still twitched a trifle:

"My husband had great belief in the possibilities of the farm, and time has justified him."

Whereas Nancy—?

By Alma Martin Estabrook

Author of "In the Snap-Net," "There Are None So Blind—", etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

OF living quarters there are many kinds in the "Greenwich Arms." Nancy's workshop, which was her place of residence as well, was in one of the front basement suites and consisted of a long wainscoted room that was shop, living, dining, and sleeping room combined, a tiny dressing room, a bath, and a kitchenette. Her worktable was set beneath the front window where it caught the north light.

Nancy was not of the *arrivistes*, but if art is "the smile of the human soul upon the house and its furnishings," then Nancy was an artist; even the jugs and pots of her kitchenette were comely. As for the water colors by which she made a living, they were another matter, yet they were more often salable than otherwise.

On a spring night Nancy pivoted in an inexpensive twentieth-century edition of a nineteenth-century frock before the long mirror in the dressing room, her small, sharp-chinned face grave with critical evaluation.

"Do you think it's really as classy as it ought to be?" she questioned anxiously, a furrow between the brows that arched with an alluring impudence.

It was a citron-yellow creation, narrow at the hem, wide at the knees, and topped by a much-puffed tunic. Out of the swathing of the corsage a red silk rose peeped, and the beads about her throat were also red. Her black hair was coiffured charmingly, an ear lock curled forward on her cheek, fol-

lowing the fashion set by a French actress the week previous at one of the local theaters.

"It's classy, all right," sighed a second girl, in a dark-blue kimono of cotton crêpe, who lay on a couch in the room beyond.

She was Ethel Killey, whom Nancy had adopted early in the winter. Nancy was always adopting some one—some one, more often than not, grown grim from loneliness or shabby from vicissitude. Ethel was one of twenty-two stenographers in a big mail-order house. The monotony and the drudgery of it had begun to make her brown eyes look larger than ever in the slender oval of her rather pale face.

Ethel was much less buoyantly alive than Nancy. In truth she dwelt overmuch upon her forlorn destiny. But she was tremendously courageous and admirable, and lately she had voluntarily added to her responsibility by taking on herself the partial support of an aunt who was dying in the West of an incurable malady.

To have heard Ethel Killey talking in the next room you would have thought her a child, a wistful, appealing child who was none too happy. To think of her as taking care of herself was impossible, yet she had done it since she was fifteen. She was twenty now.

She had come from a country of warm-topped hills and rich meadows and valleys full of blue-and-gold mists,

and the outlook from the sixth-story windows of the mail-order establishment and from the north-facing basement chilled her to the core. She was always saying so.

Nancy rarely said anything about it. She was too busy. All day long she painted at her table beneath the window, and at night she whisked away here, there, and everywhere. Her engagements were multiple. If ever a girl spun through life it was Nancy.

But she also must have dreamed of the land from which she had come, for in an old pewter vase on the table was a spray of pussy willows which she had walked seven blocks out of her way to pluck in an isolated corner of the park.

As Ethel Killey lay looking at her friend, her teeth caught her lower lip and pressed it. A passion of longing

made her dejected little figure tense—of longing to look just once as Nancy looked to-night, to possess the prankish curve of Nancy's lips and the same prankish curve of the spirit, to feel a well of gayety bubbling up in her all the time so that she could laugh and fight and work.

To fight and work and endure in silence was what took it out of you, she thought. Yet how could you chatter and babble when nature hadn't meant you to? And how could you laugh when everything was against you?



"I don't pretend to understand you. You keep so close in your little old shell."

Nancy gave a last careful pat to the newly acquired ear lock, and dived into a lower bureau drawer, bringing forth a crimson headdress of fetching design, and a pair of long white gloves. She came out into the living room and sat down beneath the light of a willow-craft lamp, flinging out one of the gloves and blowing into it. She sighed, with a chuckle that tripped up the sigh.

"I paid a frightful sum for this frock. I wouldn't dare tell you how much. It will be soup for me for months! But why grovel in the abysmal depths about a mere matter of soup?"

Her mood changed suddenly and she leaned forward out of the circle of light. "It spoils all the fun, going off like this, night after night, without you. I wish you'd come along. I wish you hadn't quarreled with Porter Hardie."

Ethel slid off the couch and went into the kitchenette. She looked like a vestal virgin when she came back bearing a glass of water, her hair in thick light-brown braids at either side of her face, the blue crêpe kimono falling in straight lines about her slim, untrammeled figure.

She emptied the glass and threw herself once more upon the couch, sitting with her feet tucked under her.

"Don't bother about me," she said coolly.

"But I do bother about you," Nancy said consideringly. "I bother a lot. You're the queerest ever! I don't pretend to understand you. You keep so close in your little old shell."

"A shell, I've noticed, is a mighty good place to keep in," Ethel replied moodily.

"It's a mighty bad place. Take it from me, the people who live in shells are the ones who get most of the jars. There's something about a shell that always makes you want to poke it." Nancy finished drawing on one glove and began on the other. After an in-

stant she said: "You're not sorry you sent Porter Hardie away, are you?"

"Don't be utterly silly!" Ethel snapped, flushing painfully.

"It's the easiest thing in the world to quarrel and then go on hopelessly wrong-headed afterward," Nancy suggested. Her voice was careless, but her eyes were keen.

"If you think I love him——"

"I don't. I only wonder if you wouldn't if you hadn't quarreled." She smoothed the white suède over her arm, and, rising carefully, adjusted the crimson headdress, being careful not to disturb the ear lock.

At the moment the buzzer whirred in the tiny entrance way and she hurried to the speaking tube.

"I'll come right down," she said.

"It's Porter Hardie," she explained. "I forgot to tell you. But I knew it wouldn't make any difference to you. It—it doesn't, does it, kiddo?"

"Why, of course, it doesn't!" Ethel cried, and yawned. A yawn is the most precarious thing in the world under certain mental conditions; it runs so easily into a sigh, the sigh into a sob.

Ethel Killey caught up her yawn just in time. There was a pause. Nancy swung her theater bag over her wrist and stooped for the accustomed kiss.

When the sound of the brisk heels had died, Ethel got up and turned the key in the door, and, returning, slid down on the couch and buried her head in the cushions. For Nancy had missed the truth by just this much—Ethel had loved Porter Hardie from the beginning, and in spite of their foolish quarrel, she would go on loving him to the end. Love, not indifference, had made her seem cold when every fiber of her being warmed to him, knew him to be the mate she desired, the man she would marry.

Now he would go through Nancy's mill, along with all the others, and along with them would be ground so

fine there wouldn't be enough left of him to gather itself together and come back to her, even if he ever wanted to come back.

She sobbed into the pillows. How was she ever to endure it? To have seen him go over to an unvisualized stranger would have been bitter enough, but to see him taken up by Nancy, whose every gay little wile she knew so well, whose mocking laughter and toss of the head and play of gray-black eyes were as familiar to her as her own face, was impossible beyond words.

It came over her smotheringly what it would mean to sit here evening after evening and watch Nancy make herself lovely for him, to listen to her talk when she came home, and to be constantly running onto them together. She couldn't endure it! She *wouldn't!* She came up out of the pillows, and beat the air with her small fists. She would find another room the first thing the next day. It didn't matter what Nancy thought, or said, or did.

But could she—could she give up Nancy? It would be terrible without her. She thought of the bleak, lonely days before Nancy had taken up with her. The memory of them turned her cold. What *was* she to do, she moaned miserably. Did she dare subject herself to the torture of the weeks which it would take Nancy's mill to finish Porter Hardie?

She was the loneliest of plain little ducklings, you see. Not that she was really plain at all, when you compared her with any one but Nancy. And even there it was more a matter of the way their lips curved than of anything else, perhaps; the downward droop of hers marked the difference between them.

In the end, as she lay there staring with blurred eyes at the pretty willow-craft lamp, she decided that she could not do without Nancy.

In the days that followed, she suf-

fered acutely, and her suffering played havoc with her looks. She told Nancy, however, that she was having an abominable case of indigestion, and she went to the extremity of taking a tablet after every meal to prove it. Her eyes got bigger and bigger in the oval of her face, and her soft little mouth gathered itself up closer and closer, firmer and firmer.

Sometimes when Nancy hurt her more than ordinarily by chuckling impishly over some trick she had played on Porter Hardie, she had to hold herself in from crying out that it was *her* happiness Nancy was tearing to tatters along with his. How she kept from it Heaven only knows.

For what happened she was as unprepared as Nancy herself.

Nancy came home one night from the theater, where she had been with Hardie, and, following her habit, began to undress by the street light that made the apartment just light enough so that she could move about without falling over things.

"Asleep?" she had questioned softly on entering, and Ethel had made no reply.

To make no reply was, as Ethel had discovered, the easiest way to protect herself from bubbling confidences—and bubbling confidences tore at a heart already sufficiently lacerated.

So to-night, as usual, she breathed deeply and regularly, giving no sign of consciousness, but from beneath the fringe of her thick lashes she watched Nancy, a sense of something utterly devastating upon her.

Had Nancy, the invulnerable, Nancy, the heartless—had *Nancy* fallen in love, and with Porter Hardie? The breath stopped in her throat.

Never had Nancy, whose tumbling carelessness had been her friend's despair, moved like that, slowly, thoughtfully, back and forth, folding things and holding them in her hands for ages

a f t e r w a r d ,
s t o p p i n g
m i d w a y b e -
t w e e n c l o s e t
a n d b u r e a u ,
a n d s t a n d i n g
s t a r i n g w i d e -
e y e d a t n o t h -
i n g , t h e n
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t i n g d o w n a t
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s o f t l y , s o f t l y ,
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A f t e r w h a t
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N a n c y m a d e
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s l i p p i n g i n ,
l a y p e r f e c t l y
s t i l l , w i t h n o
p r e t e n s e o f
c l o s i n g h e r
e y e s , b u t
s t a r i n g
s t r a i g h t u p a t
t h e c e i l i n g .

S h e w a s
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i m a g i n e N a n c y s t a r i n g t h r o u g h e i g h t
s l e e p l e s s h o u r s a t a c e i l i n g , h o w e v e r .

N a n c y s p o k e , i n t h e g r a y d a u n ,
m a t c h i n g h e r f i n g e r t i p s l i k e a n a c o l y t e .

"W h a t a q u e e r o l d w o r l d i t i s , i s n ' t
i t ? " s h e m u s e d .



"Porter Hardie." Ethel choked. *"Oh, Nancy, it's too terrible! It's horrible beyond all belief."*

"So you're in love!" Ethel breathed.

"Does the comment prove it?" chuckled Nancy.

"It's what people usually say when they first find out. It isn't the strangeness of the world that impresses them, so much as the strangeness of the thing that's come to them."

"Dear me, how wise you are!" Nancy exclaimed noncommittally.

But Ethel Killey knew. Her heart told her.

For days after this, Nancy's spirit coasted the clouds. Yet Ethel was certain no betrothal had taken place. It was like Nancy to hold happiness off, inspecting it with her head on one side as she did any new and shining possession, dallying a bit over it, then suddenly snatching it to her in the full glory of ownership. That was her way with everything.

"I must go before it happens," Ethel thought. "It would kill me to be here then."

But she stayed on, clinging to Nancy until the last minute.

Nancy was painting madly away one very late afternoon. The world was sweet with deepening spring, and she was wild to be out in it, but the business of water colors must go on if one were to live. A blue smudge ran upward across her smooth brown forehead, but the pink in her cheeks was the pink of garden roses, and as she worked, she hummed snatches of gay little songs.

A great red sun was setting. Two streaks of light slanted across the room. People were pouring homeward. Nancy felt curiously akin to them, drawn inexplicably nearer than she had ever been. A companionable warmth filled her. All her life she had felt her kinship merely for those who were vagabond in spirit, those to whom life was an adventure; but a sobering, steady influence was at work in her now. She was one with those to whom life was earnest. A kind of eager gravity fell upon her.

She put the last touch to an old beech tree she was painting, and, standing off to inspect it, saw, through the window above her worktable, Ethel hurrying home.

Something unfamiliar in the familiar

little figure took her swiftly to the entrance-way door.

"What is it?" she cried. "What's happened?"

Ethel pushed on into the apartment. When they faced each other behind the closed door, she said, in the toneless voice of those who are numb beneath shock:

"The evening papers! Haven't you heard? They're crying it on the street."

"I haven't heard anything. Tell me."

"Porter Hardie." Ethel choked. "Oh, Nancy, it's too terrible! It's horrible beyond all belief. He's been—been stealing from the firm for months. He's in"—a shiver ran over her from shoulders to heels—"in jail!"

She slid out of her coat and stood trying to hold herself in from going to pieces. A pitiful little poise of control she made for just an instant, then, with a sobbing cry, she slipped into a chair and began to rock her body back and forth.

Nancy stood looking down at her, her eyes widening. In that revealing moment it must have been given her to see Ethel just as she was—a woman to love once and to be happy or to suffer ever afterward.

"So you care for him?" she breathed.

"You couldn't help but love him! How do you expect me to keep from it?" Ethel sobbed. She dropped her head to her arms as they rested on the chair.

Nancy did not speak. The little basement apartment was very quiet.

"*You and I in love with the same man!*" whispered Ethel Killey wildly.

All the inanimate things about them seemed to cry it back to them—the sketches on the walls, the unfinished things on the worktable, the pretty willow-craft lamp, the cushion-laden couch, the books, the flowers in the old pewter vase. It was as if they all understood.

"What shall we do about it?" moaned Ethel, her head still buried in her arms.

Nancy stood for the moment as one splendidly at bay, her body drawn up, her head thrown back, a strange brightness in her eyes—the eyes that said as plainly as eyes ever said: "You threw him over, out of caprice or some silly, trumped-up sense of injury. You told him to go where he would, and—he came to me. Now, when I have only to stretch out my hand to keep him, you suddenly want him back again. Is it right? Is it fair? How can you expect—"

The strange, hard brightness faded from the considering eyes, as they continued to rest on the small, shaking figure. Such openness of emotion, and such terrifying intensity, Nancy had never seen. It affected her strangely. A kind of maternal tenderness awoke in her. Her instinct was to gather Ethel into her arms and soothe her—to quiet this storm of emotion, at any cost. But something held her back. Her mind was all tumult, like a room in which has been stirred a perfect fury of dust motes that whirl and dance and swing together.

"It—it shall be—as you say," Ethel Killey cried desperately.

Into Nancy's mind a wind seemed suddenly to blow—a wind of the spirit. It left it fresh and clean

and cool. Nancy heard her own voice. Very level it was and perfectly natural.

"I don't think I care as much for him as I did—not after what he has done."

Ethel Killey came to her feet. Her little wet face was quivering with protest, with amazement.

"You mean that you'll throw him over because he's been weak?" she challenged.

Nancy lifted the corner of her apron and wiped away the blue smudge on her forehead. She contrived something that passed very well for a smile.



He held out his hand to her, and she lingered, letting her hand rest in his for a second.

"You don't throw over what doesn't belong to you." Her manner changed. She said briskly: "Shall you go to him?"

"Of course I'll go, the minute I'm sure—" Ethel hesitated. She was leaning against the edge of the table looking at Nancy. The red sun had set and the room had begun to fill with shadows. Ethel blinked her tear-swollen eyes as if to clear her vision. "I can't understand you!" she exclaimed.

"Reforming has never appealed to me," Nancy commented, over her shoulder, as she began to set her worktable to rights for the night. "I'd ask Mrs. Sloan, upstairs, to go with me, if I were you."

Ethel got into her coat. "There's only one way to explain your attitude," she snapped. "You don't care anything about him. You never have. If you had, the mother part of you would have made you forgive him."

She went quickly out. Nancy stood for a moment listening to the brisk, decisive fall of the small heels. She smiled queerly.

An hour later, as she made a pretense of cooking supper in the kitchenette, she heard Ethel's voice in the court, and, looking out, saw her there with Porter Hardie.

They were standing at the head of the basement steps, looking at each other with the same old understanding. As Ethel turned away, he held out his hand to her, and she lingered, letting her hand rest in his for a second.

Then she came running down to Nancy, and in a whirlwind of emotion threw herself into Nancy's arms.

"It wasn't he who did it! I should have known! How could I ever have thought it, Nancy? Oh, how could I? It was a boy named Hardy, who has only been with the firm a little while. The papers got the wrong name. Porter was at the jail when Mrs. Sloan and I got there. He'd gone to see what

he could do to help the boy. When he saw me and knew why I'd come—Oh, Nancy, Nancy, I'm the happiest girl in the world! There wasn't any time to talk, for Mrs. Sloan was with us, but I'm sure—"

"Of course," said Nancy, freeing herself from the fierce pressure of the encircling arms and bending over the flour bin.

Ethel took off her hat and stood smoothing the velvet bow on it.

"It's the strangest thing in the world how, sometimes, it takes just such a thing as this—something big and terrifying—to make us see things as they are, to know our own hearts. Suppose this hadn't happened! Oh, Nancy, how we were all three groping in the dark, trying to persuade ourselves—"

"Supper will be ready in five minutes," said Nancy, matter-of-factly.

Ethel laughed and went to make herself ready. She stopped beside the table to bend over the flowers in the pewter vase. She looked as if she had grown where they had grown, and had blossomed along with them. An awakened, radiant, furiously alive little thing she was at last.

"I feel as if I'd been out in the cold all my life and had suddenly had a big door opened to me—a big door beyond which there was a fire and light. It's the most wonderful feeling on earth, Nancy. You can't imagine, because you've never been lonely and miserable."

She snapped on the dressing-room light, and began to take down her best gown. She was going to the theater with Porter Hardie. As she dressed she sang.

In the kitchenette, Nancy stopped to listen. The queer smile touched her lips again, twisting them a little. It was the first time she had ever heard Ethel sing.

"Oh, Nancy," Ethel called to her, "I know I'm going to be so happy!"



The Fortunes of Mattie Miller

By Helen R. Martin

Author of "Barnabetta," "Tillie, a Mennonite Maid," "The Parasite," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS*

Edward Oliver Potter, the successful novelist, tells his friend and illustrator, Archibald Starr, that he needs material and inspiration for his new novel. Starr assists in securing him a position as principal of the high school in the little Pennsylvania Dutch town of Adamstown. The artist confesses his admiration for Miss Beatrice Jenkins Ford, whom he has recently met at her débutante party. Miss Ford, adopted step-daughter of the multi-millionaire, Stanley Ford, of New York, has decided early in life that society does not interest her and that she means to have a "career." Against the will of her family she goes through college, and, to secure experience, accepts, as Miss Beatrice Jenkins, the position of assistant principal in the high school at Adamstown. Under the name of "E. Oliver," the novelist arrives and takes up his residence at the home of John Miller, whose family consists of his third wife, small son, and a grown daughter named Mattie. The latter suffers from a paralyzed hand, but performs uncomplainingly the entire work of the house. Gentle and unselfish, she is most unfairly treated by her father and stepmother, and immediately stirs Oliver's sympathy and interest. The high school opens in original fashion, and the new principal and his beautiful assistant find themselves curiously puzzled by each other, with a quaint and growing interest. Oliver wins admiration for the way he deals with Sam Dietz, the school bully, in expelling him from his classes. He interests Miss Jenkins in Mattie Miller's unfortunate case, and she promises to call on her. A letter from Archibald Starr tells Oliver of his continued infatuation for Miss Beatrice Ford, who is said to be traveling in Europe. He promises to make an early week-end visit to Oliver. In the meantime Mrs. Miller's brother Joseph, old, ill and alone, arrives from Mexico for a visit. He is coldly received and about to be turned away, when Oliver intercedes for him. After an attack of heart failure, at the supper table, when Mattie ministers to him, he asks the family to come to his room to receive the gifts he has brought them.

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM his armchair, Oliver witnessed the distribution of the gifts in the next room. There was for Mr. Miller a panama hat and a box of fine cigars; for Mrs. Miller a roll of black silk for a gown, and a breastpin—a Mexican opal set in gold; for Johnny a sword made of Mexican coins ingeniously strung together, and a cowboy's outfit.

"Where's Mattie?" Joseph then demanded, when he had listened to the lukewarm but wondering thanks of his sister and her husband, and to Johnny's

unbounded enthusiasm over his gifts, as they all sat gathered about him and his trunk.

"Did you spend on *her*, too?" asked his sister disapprovingly.

"Well, when I was gettin' together some presents fur all of yous, it ain't likely, is it, that, knowin' mister had his daughter here, I'd slight her? If I'd knowned you had a teacher boardin' here—as decent a feller, too, as this here Mr. Oliver—I'd have brang *him* sompin—a panama hat or whatever. He ain't so ignorant but what he'd appreciate one of them panamas!" said Jo-

*The first installment of this story appeared in the October number of SMITH'S.

seph, with a contemptuous glance at his brother-in-law. "Up here in Pennsylvania that there hat I gev John would cost anyhow fifty dollars. I gev only eight dollars fur it down there."

"Eight dollars! Fur jist a hat! *Eight, yet!* Och, you're guyin' us!" exclaimed John incredulously.

"Ask Mr. Oliver what a good panama comes at. He has the *appearance*, anyhow, of bein' a gent to know the value of a real panama—though, to be sure, if he's livin' off of the Adamstown school board, he ain't wery familiar, neither, with big money!"

"Could I git fifty dollars fur this here lid, do you say?" John demanded, examining, with a new interest, the fine, beautiful hat.

"Could you '*git*'? Well, I didn't fetch it along so you could sell it, but fur you to wear it."

"I ain't goin' round with no fifty dollars on my head."

"It would mebby look funny to wear a hat worth so much more'n your head-piece, John," admitted Joseph.

"I'll sell it to whoever'll give me a good price fur it," affirmed Mr. Miller. "No wonder, Joseph, you ain't got any laid by—with *sich* extravagance yet! Eight dollars fur one hat! *Yi, yi, yi!*"

"And why"—Mrs. Miller repeated her question—"would you go buyin' a present fur Mattie that ain't no relation of yours?"

"She acts more like a relation than some that is, though," suggested Joseph. "Where's she at?"

"She's downstairs doin' the supper work. Give me the present you brang her. I'll keep it fur her. What *is* it, anyhow?"

Joseph took from the trunk a jewel case, held it up, and opened it. It contained a very beautiful necklace of opals.

Mrs. Miller gazed at it greedily. She loved finery. "I like it better'n my breastpin," she said tentatively. "Mat-

tie ain't got no frock that would go with *sich* a grand necklace. It wouldn't look *according*."

"Why ain't she? John's prosperous. Why ain't she got as good clo'es as what you're got, Emmy?" asked Joseph suspiciously.

"Well, Joseph," retorted Mr. Miller, "I guess me and Emmy don't have to account to *you* fur how we dress my daughter."

"Mebby not—mebby not, John. But then, again, mebby you do. We'll see—we'll see oncet. Hi, there!" he called across the room to Johnny, who was quite wild with excitement over the cowboy suit he had donned. "Johnny! Go tell Mattie to come up here."

"I'll take the necklace fur her," Mrs. Miller interposed, holding out her hand. "You're not to go, Johnny."

Joseph eyed his sister uncertainly. "You don't want fur her to have it. I better give it to her myself."

"She's too busy to come up. I'll take it down to her, Jo, after while."

"Are you sure you will, Emmy?" he challenged her doubtfully.

"Well, Jo, you needn't pass no insults!"

"I wouldn't want to insin'yate that you're worse'n what you are a'ready," answered Joseph. "All right—here, then."

Oliver almost started from his chair to stop him as he saw him close the jewel case and pass it over into his sister's eager hands.

"Now what did he do that for?" thought Oliver impatiently. "It is downright stupid of him! Mattie will never see that necklace!"

An instant he hesitated—then, quietly leaving his room, he ran downstairs to the kitchen.

"Mattie," he called, as she stood washing dishes at the sink, "come! Quickly, Mattie!"

Mattie started and turned pale as she

ran to him. "Is he sick again—Uncle Jo?"

"No, but he wants you. Come!"

He took her hand to draw her after him to the stairs. But she hung back.

"If he isn't sick, I'd better not let the work."

"Damn the work! Uncle Jo wants you to come and get the present he brought you. A beautiful necklace, Mattie!"

"Oh!" Mattie's eyes sparkled for an instant, but she still hesitated. "Emmy wouldn't leave me have it anyway."

"Come and get it—and then give it to me to keep for you," he suggested quickly—and his forceful urging found her powerless to resist him.

"Mr. Oliver," she said timidly, as they went upstairs, "I want to tell you something."

"Yes?"

"Mr. Oliver, if you go too far in standing up for Uncle Jo and—and for me—Emmy won't leave you stay here and—"

"Well, Mattie?"

"I'd rather bear anything than have you go."

"Would you? Why?"

"It seems as if the days are not so long and empty and dead for me since you are here, Mr. Oliver."

"Thank you, Mattie. We are good friends, aren't we?"

"Friends? Could you call me your friend, Mr. Oliver?" she asked, a little breathlessly. "I never in my life had a friend!"

"Emerson says, Mattie, that the best moments in life are those in which we find a friend that is truly such. I'm proud if I've won your friendship, Mattie!"

They reached, at this moment, the door of Uncle Jo's room.

"Here she is, Uncle Jo!" exclaimed Oliver. "Here's Mattie come to get her present! The very first piece of jewelry she ever— Why?" He broke

off with a frown of annoyance. "Where is Mrs. Miller?"

"Cleared out with the jewel case. Call your mother back here, Johnny."

"Mom!" yelled Johnny, and in a moment Mrs. Miller, looking eager for more spoils, reappeared. At sight of Mattie she stopped short.

"You ain't done your supper dishes a'ready! What are you doin' up here? You're got your wash to fold, too."

"Uncle Jo wanted me—"

"Uncle Jo! He ain't your uncle, Mattie, and you ain't to call him uncle."

"I won't leave her call me nothin' else. I'm her stepuncle, anyhow. Hand over her necklace, Emmy."

"I put it away."

"Well, go git it. I want to give it to her. I want to see how it becomes her."

Mrs. Miller sank into a chair. "I'm tired, Joseph. I'll git it after a while. Go on down to your work, Mattie—you're wastin' your time."

"You sayed you'd take her present right down to her! What did you do with it? Don't you go, Mattie," he ordered, "till you're got your necklace. Go git it, Emmy!"

"When Mattie comes up to bed, I'll give it to her. Go on down, Mattie, and finish up."

"Yes, and I guess you left your kitchen lamp burnin' all this time," put in her father. "You don't have to pay for the coal oil, heh?"

"Emmy," Joseph insisted, "you go git that there necklace."

Emmy looked at him placidly. "It kin wait."

"I want to give it to Mattie myself. You go git it right aways."

"Well, Joseph, I guess I ain't takin' no orders from you in my own house!"

"I want that there necklace right aways. Go git it."

"I ain't a-goin' to. I tell you right now, Jo, I'm a-goin' to *keep* it! Mattie ain't got no right to have sich things



With a rare light of pleasure in her eyes, Mattie gazed down at the beautiful pendant that
rose and fell upon her young bosom.

when she lives here off of us and don't earn a cent fur herself. I'll accept it, Joseph, as part payment fur your board whilst you're stayin' here," she added obligingly.

"Well, Emmy, are you a thief yet?"

"If you keep passin' insults, Joseph, you can't stay here!"

"Mattie!" Joseph peremptorily checked the girl as a second time she started to leave the room. "Don't go yet! Why," he suddenly exclaimed in astonishment, "look-a-here, would you?" And thrusting his hand into his pocket, he drew forth a necklace precisely like the one Mrs. Miller had carried away to hide. "Mattie, come here once!"

He rose to clasp it about the girl's neck, while the others looked on, puzzled or bewildered.

"Did you bring *two* sich necklaces?" asked Mrs. Miller, daunted and chagrined.

"And what do *they* come at?" inquired Mr. Miller, while Mattie, with a rare light of pleasure in her eyes, gazed down at the beautiful pendant that rose and fell upon her young bosom.

"You run over, Emmy, and git the one you took and leave us compare 'em oncet, ain't?" suggested Jo. And this time her sister obeyed at once.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Jo when she was gone. "Emmy'll have yellow jaundice when she looks in that there empty case I handed over to her! I ain't smart, but neither am I that dumb that I'd hand over to her this here necklace of yours, Mattie. Now, you take and *keep* it. Put it where she can't git it. See!"

"Yes, Uncle Jo. Oh, thank you!"

"Here's a jool case with a lock and key, girl. John," he sharply addressed Mr. Miller, "if you or Emmy tries to git it off of her, I'll have the police on you! Now run along, Mattie, before Emmy comes back."

Unused to gifts or to kindness, the radiant look of gratitude Mattie gave him, as she locked her jewel case and went away, brought into the man's face a softened, answering look that illumined it.

Mrs. Miller came back as Mattie disappeared, her face blank from the shock of having found the hidden jewel case quite empty.

"Did you play a joke off on me, or whatever?" she demanded of her brother.

"Leave me tell you somepin, Emmy! You and John best watch out or you'll git another joke played off on yous that'll have this here one rollin' downhill! Now you mind to what I warn you!"

"I must say, Jo, you take it pretty funny—your comin' here to end your days at our place and then playin' mean jokes on us as soon as you're settled here with us. You had ought to be turnin' your thoughts upon your approachin' end, Jo. You'll mebby die horrible if you don't! You want to be thinkin' of the awful meetin' with your Gawd that's ahead of you—instead of actin' up deceitful and underhanded by the people that's givin' you a home and takin' care of you."

"Now I didn't take notice that you was doin' that, Emmy—givin' me a home and takin' care of me. Them facts, somehow, escaped my notice!"

"You talk awful queer, Jo Yoder!"

Joseph, beginning to look white and very tired, turned to his bed.

"Well, let me in peace now fur the night, all'f yous; will yous?"

Oliver lingered a moment as the rest went away to tell Joseph that he would leave the door open between their rooms and would be ready to come to him any time he called.

Joseph looked at him strangely as he replied: "And you never seen me till to-day! Emmy and John ain't botherin' about how I git through the night, are

they? As fur as I kin make out, you ain't got no ax to grind in bein' kind to me. Well, stranger, it does a body good to meet up with as decent a fellah as you!"

He held out his thin hand, and Oliver clasped it for an instant without speaking—then quietly left the room.

CHAPTER XV.

Oliver was not greatly surprised when next morning Sam Dietz turned up at school with a mind chastened, humble, and apologetic.

The only theme of conversation in the village since the previous day had been the teacher's easy conquest of this notorious bully. From the stage driver to the ragman, Oliver was looked upon with an astonishment and a respect of which he was, of course, quite unaware. Therefore, his quiet, kindly reception of Sam Dietz's apologies profoundly impressed not only the whole school, but even Sam Dietz himself with a sense of the teacher's magnanimity. Not to gloat over his pupil's humiliation; not to be "swell-headed" because he had been able to lick the fellow who for three years had driven away every teacher that had come to the Adamstown High School; to treat his own prowess so casually, as if he were quite used to such feats—well, poor Susy Hohenheimer would have made eyes and giggled worse than ever had he not made her stiff with terror at the bare idea of his catching her at it.

After school, one afternoon a few days later, Miss Jenkins informed the principal that she meant to walk with him to his boarding house "to call on your Mattie."

"My Mattie?" he questioned as he helped her on with her fur coat in her classroom, for an early autumn frost to-day had brought forth winter wraps.

This coat of Miss Jenkins, by the way, gave him food for thought as they

came out of the schoolhouse together and made their way through the village street. Oliver was quite unintelligent as to a woman's garb, but he was not so wholly ignorant as not to know that a sable coat was a garment not usually worn by a school-teacher working for fifty dollars a month. Why, it would take several years of teaching to pay for such a coat.

It proved, as they walked through the town, that in the eyes of the villagers the cut of this coat was so outlandish—New York or Paris styles being naturally rather freakish in Adamstown—that shopkeepers came to their doors to look after it; from the Adamstown Shaving Parlor, from the ice-cream parlor, from Groff's Groceries-Boots-Shoes-Notions-Confections, from Slabaugh's Drug Store, from Yokum's boarding house, from Doctor Stauffer's office, from the life-insurance office, the inmates stepped forth to stare after it. Women working about the front of their houses came to the sidewalk for a better view; children and a dog or two followed it. The frankness, the undisguised wonder with which a village woman would, as the coat approached, stop working, lean on her broom, and stare impressed both Oliver and his companion as being more primitive than they had supposed even Adamstown could be. But they did not tell each other of this impression. Each of them had reasons for concealing it from the other.

"I call her 'your Mattie,'" Miss Jenkins responded, "because you seem to have assumed a sort of guardianship over her."

"Her situation seems to me so awfully unfortunate that I've got to do something about it. I hope when you've seen her—if you see her—your more fertile brain will think of a way out for the child."

"If I see her? I shall see her," nodded Miss Jenkins confidently.

"I wish you were Mrs. Miller's step-daughter!" remarked Oliver fervently.

"That's kind of you!"

"You'd know how to put her in her place."

"Is your Mattie, then, a weak character?"

"By no means! To be sure, she isn't aggressive; she endures in silence their offensive treatment of her, but at the same time she isn't crushed; one feels her individuality all the time. She endures because she sees no other way out. You *would* see a way out, I fancy—or you'd make them afraid of you."

"You think so?" said Miss Jenkins thoughtfully. "Would you believe," she asked him suddenly, "that all my life, until very recently, I have been as submissive to authority as you say your Mattie is?"

"It isn't *easy* to believe!"

"But it is so. Mr. Oliver—to continue our discussion of last Friday—you were lamenting the modern woman's unwillingness to devote herself—mind, body, and soul—to the virtuous pursuit of making men comfortable."

"Not 'lamenting.' You'll remember I said I didn't criticize her—the modern woman—I merely stated the fact that woman is not what she was aforetime."

"Well, I should hope she *wasn't*! It took her so long to change from the weakness and error of her ways! Haven't you ever realized, Mr. Oliver, that the women whom men find alluring are nearly always the women in whom the prim domestic virtues—fine conscientiousness, devotion to duty, unselfishness—are *not* conspicuous? *Nature* does not seem to put a premium upon the admirable feminine qualities! Sex attraction is most assuredly not founded upon them. I want to know, then, are those qualities really admirable, since Nature discounts them?"

Oliver almost gasped.

"Don't misunderstand me, Mr. Oliver—I'm rather inclined to be over-puritanic myself. It's an inherited limitation that I can't overcome. Haven't you *felt* that I am?"

"That you are puritanic?"

"Yes," she humbly acknowledged the "limitation."

"You puritanic?" he grinned. "Well, no, I think I find you rather shocking!"

"Oh!" She looked up at him in naive surprise. "I suppose," she thoughtfully considered it, "that is because of your——"

She was going to say, "because of your village point of view," but she modified it: "because you are unused to the modern college woman, Mr. Oliver."

"I haven't known many," he gravely admitted, inwardly amused at this tone of patronage she habitually used toward him. How Baldy would appreciate hearing Ed Potter patronized by this little teacher!

"I don't agree with you," he said, "that Nature discounts the finer feminine qualities. If worthless women do marry, they are usually childless."

"But why does Nature so waste herself, then, making sex attraction spring from what is not of use to her?"

"You see," Oliver explained didactically, "what a man wants in a woman is a combination of what you call 'the prim domestic virtues' and feminine charm."

"A large order! Yes," she nodded, "the favorite theme of our men novelists—Edward O. Potter, for instance, in his novel, 'An Open Mind'—seems to be the tragic disillusionment of men who, having fallen in love with just beauty and married it, having looked no farther before marriage than just to mere personal attraction—discover to their unreasonable amazement and indignation that this beauty is *not* the expression of spiritual and mental perfection. What right had they to assume

that it was—to pass by every unbeautiful woman, whatever her ideal worth, and then feel bitterly wronged because a fine complexion and a good figure do not always carry with them all the other qualities they desire in a wife? Why should Nature divide things so unevenly as to give beautiful women all the goodness and brains and common sense and genius for cooking and economical management and the Lord knows what else men expect?"

"That novelist, Potter, should be exposed!"

"He quite sufficiently exposes himself—and his sex. If he made a man fall in love with true worth in a woman, would it be *life* he was depicting?"

"And it wouldn't sell," pronounced Oliver gloomily.

"Oh, as to that," she said loftily, "Potter is a writer who is above pandering to the commercial in the pursuit of his art. If you read his novels, you would know that, Mr. Oliver."

"Is he?"

"Most certainly."

"That's nice of him."

"'Nice!'" she repeated derisively.

"Well, I never saw *quite* as much in Potter as you seem to find. You see, I'm not as bright as you are."

"Oh, pshaw!"

"But, Miss Jenkins, I heard a yarn about Potter once—I heard that his illustrator, Bald—Archibald Starr—advised him, since he was always down on his luck financially—"

"But he sells enormously!"

"I know he does. But, you see, he is—they say he is—rather luxurious and unbusinesslike—the 'artistic' working in him, I suppose—or perhaps temperament. And so Starr advised him to marry for money—so I was told."

"Oh, but I don't believe Mr. Starr is that kind of a man at *all*!"

"You judge so from his—from his illustrations?"

Beatrice darted a keen glance into the

face of the tall man at her side. For a person of some brains, what an unspeakable ass he could be sometimes! "You make me tired!" was her retort.

Oliver bent back his head and laughed.

"Then you think a man of 'noble mind,'" he asked, "would not be guilty of marrying for money?"

"If a man like Edward O. Potter married for money, he would never write another book worth reading. I don't believe he is 'luxurious,' as you say he is said to be. His novels are too vital. And there is nothing that so eats out one's vitality as luxury. Don't you think so?"

"I'm not sufficiently familiar with luxury to be a judge—are you?"

She flushed a bit as she parried his question. "I believe," she said, "that the time is coming when it will be counted a disgrace not to live simply."

"I hope that I may have at least a little fling at luxury before it's so discredited," he exclaimed ruefully. "But, you know," he reminded her, "ideas as to what constitutes 'luxury' vary so widely. What would be the utmost simplicity to you might be a riot of luxury to *me*."

He little dreamed that he was speaking the literal truth as to their relative standards of simple living; so he was greatly amused when she, off her guard, gravely responded: "That, of course, is perfectly true. But I mean," she continued, "that the ideal of living of the future will be a refined, though æsthetic, simplicity as over against the insidiously enervating, wholly unnecessary luxury of—of people like—well, say those Fords of New York City."

"Oh, but *they* are not such very high liver," he assured her. "Old Ford's too tight."

She was silent for an instant from astonishment. "But," she faltered, "how on earth do *you* know?"

"Newspapers."

"You read newspaper society gossip, do you—and believe it?"

"It isn't always accurate, I suppose."

Suddenly an idea flashed upon Oliver that made him turn upon this girl at his side one of those piercing glances of his which once or twice before had startled and thrilled her. It had been growing upon his consciousness lately that Miss Jenkins' clothing was rather fine and exquisite. This expensive apparel, this sable coat, these week-end trips to Philadelphia, some few rare jewels she occasionally wore, the village gossip as to her extravagant habits—all these things that could not be purchased with her earnings— Could it be that she was familiar with luxury—purchased with her undoubtedly beauty? Perish the base thought! He turned hot at the bare idea of such a suspicion in connection with this clear-eyed, noble-browed maiden.

The reason that not a suspicion of the real truth occurred to him was that the girl's general tone and bearing really seemed to him rather bourgeois—or at least they certainly did not suggest to him unmistakably that she must be the granddaughter of an English nobleman—though it is quite certain that had he met her in her native environment, he would have found her original rather than crude.

"Marrying for money"—she reverted to the subject of their discussion—"is much more base in a man than in a woman."

"I should like to know why. And you an advocate of the equality of the sexes!"

"Men have always pretended to scorn women for marrying for money," she returned, "yet they would close against us all other avenues for money-making. Men have their opportunities for making large fortunes through work and service. If women want to do the same, they are reminded of the sex

barriers that men would set up to keep them in their place—their place often of mere ornament. The only service desired of them is that of making men comfortable."

"I have nothing to say," Oliver admitted himself answered, his tone of meekness making her smile.

"By the way," he abruptly inquired, "your week-ends in Philadelphia—you enjoy them?"

"I don't believe I could stick it out here if I didn't get away now and then. I'm really learning to enjoy what I always supposed I hated—the noise, the bustle, the crowds, all the common things that bring me in touch with the populace. I even patronize the trolley cars to get into real contact with the people."

Oliver looked at her. Was this his assistant? Talking about "the populace" as if she were of royal blood! Speaking of "even" patronizing the trolley cars and suchlike "common things"! Why did she put on such absurd airs, such a sensible girl as she seemed to be in other respects?

"Do you find it dull staying right on here all the time?" she asked.

"Sometimes it's as exciting as Broadway—as fraught with human interest, anyway. For instance—" And he related to her the development in Mattie's situation caused by the arrival of "Uncle Jo."

"You do have things happen where you live," she admitted. "At the Swan it's entirely humdrum."

"I don't believe I should find it so!" he exclaimed impetuously. "Keep your eyes open and you'll find the human tragedy under your nose always, everywhere. One gets at it, of course, in primitive communities like this, much more directly, much less disguised than in more developed civilizations. People here are like children, without the art of concealment. Mattie is the only one in the Miller household who doesn't



"I call her 'your Mattie,'" Miss Jenkins responded, "because you seem to have assumed a sort of guardianship over her."

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constantly betray everything she's thinking and feeling. Mrs. Miller's deceit is so transparent as to be no deceit."

"It will be interesting to see how the girl is going to fare if she persists in standing by the unwelcome uncle," Miss Jenkins remarked.

"Mrs. Miller had to get the breakfast this morning because Mattie and I were helping the poor fellow in one of his heart attacks upstairs in his room. Maybe it didn't raise a row! When I came away, I left Mattie crying—the first time I've seen her do that! She's

usually quite remarkably self-contained. Uncle Jo confided to me this morning: 'I always had so fond fur my sister, it hurts, mister, to have her feelin' toward me the way she does! And I was wonderful sorry when you tolle me John Miller was prosperous, fur if he was hard up, it would excuse Emmy some fur not makin' me welcome.' So," concluded Oliver, "I'm glad that, in spite of all it may cost Mattie, Uncle Jo has *her* to stand between him and that vampire of a sister!"

"Does he appreciate the girl's opposing her stepmother for his sake?" Miss Jenkins wanted to know.

"He's pathetically grateful to her, Miss Jenkins. He clings to her piteously. And she, womanlike, because of her own loneliness and friendlessness, I think, responds to his dependence with all the motherliness that's in her and a little extra, too!"

"She isn't *quite* friendless," Miss Jenkins said, looking up at him.

"If she were," he returned with a catch of his breath, "I think this village would know a tragedy before long! I'm going to avert that if I can."

"You mean," Beatrice exclaimed, "she would take her own life?"

"I believe they would drive her even to that."

"If they ever do order her out of the house, you send her to me, Mr. Oliver, at the Swan. I'll pay her board there until something can be found for her."

"That's more generous than prudent, I'm afraid," he gravely returned. "I could not let you tax yourself with an expense like that for my little friend. I should be glad, however, to pay her board there *through* you—I could not very well do it directly."

"Between us, at any rate, we'll take care of her, Mr. Oliver."

"Thank you, Miss Jenkins," he returned warmly.

They had come to the Millers' house,

and Oliver took his assistant into the parlor, wondering, as he opened a shutter to let in the air and light that were always excluded to save the carpet from fading, whether her taste was sufficiently above that of this village to give her an appreciation of Mrs. Miller's parlor.

He left her to its contemplation while he went to summon Mattie.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was not Mattie, however, but Mrs. Miller, looking fresh and sweet in a blue frock and a spotless white apron, who presently came into the parlor. From an upstairs window she had seen Mr. Oliver coming down the street with the "lady assistant," and she had felt greatly flattered at his bringing her home with him, for the whole village looked with mingled respect, jealousy, and suspicion upon the two strangers in their midst who were "enough educated to teach a *high* school yet."

"He's bringin' her here to make up to me mebby fur the mean way he's takin' up fur Joseph and Mattie agin' us," had been her interpretation of this apparent overture. And hurriedly tying on a clean white apron, she had gone downstairs at once to receive her visitor.

"Won't you spare your hat and coat?" she inquired in her most dulcet tone when she had shaken hands with Miss Jenkins and they had both sat down.

Beatrice was at a loss. "'Spare them?' she vaguely repeated.

"Yes, do spare 'em. It's a little warm in toward what it is out."

"Thank you; I'll take off my coat," she responded, slipping out of her heavy fur.

"It's some cold out, ain't? Me, I put a little something underneath on this morning then," Mrs. Miller remarked conversationally. "Mister, he

has so afraid fur me to take cold. You see we lost two a'ready."

"Lost two—children?" inquired Beatrice sympathetically.

"No, two wives. Our first wife she died of a disease she had that the doctor said was fatal. And our second died of her baby. And the baby, it died because it nursed at the bottle. Yes, mister he had bad luck a'ready—till he got me. Our first, she was sich a doppel yet!"

"A—what? What is 'a doppel yet'?"

"Och, she was so dumb that way. She didn't even know how to make soap yet! Now think! Well, to be sure, she could make wonderful pretty fancywork—but, you see, that, to be sure, mister he wasn't used to, to see a woman settin' round sewin' fancy-work all the time. So it didn't go just so well neither."

Beatrice had a fleeting sense of incongruity in the idea of a man like Mr. Oliver living with these people as a member of the family, for one could certainly not tell from anything about him that he was not a gentleman born.

"How do you like it, livin' at the hotel?" Mrs. Miller asked sociably.

"I manage to be very comfortable."

"They're wonderful clean there, ain't they? Missus is very particular. Every Sunday, still, she gives herself a nice bath."

"Yes," responded Beatrice politely, "it's quite noticeable."

"I guess you took notice, too, a'ready that she's going to have her ninth baby soon?"

"I have," said Beatrice succinctly.

"Yes, her mister says that's the only way he kin keep her home. When there ain't no baby, she's runnin' all the time, and all the time she's wantin' somepin new again, he says."

Did the woman talk like this before Mr. Oliver, Beatrice wondered. What barbarians!

"That's a swell frock you're got on. Did you git it *ready-made*?"

"No."

"Your sleeves look little toward mine. Is big sleeves goin' out?"

"I believe so."

"One day I seen you on the street in sich a white cashmere frock. It looked just like a shroud. I do, now, like to see you in that there frock. It becomes you so good. It *would* make you an awful nice shroud, ain't?"

"But I hope to outlive the frock, Mrs. Miller."

"Yes, I guess!" Mrs. Miller solemnly agreed. "Who hooks you up still at the hotel?"

"I have to wait on myself."

"That's mean, too, ain't—when a body has to hook theirselves?"

"I believe you said your daughter was at home? I should like to see her, please."

Mrs. Miller leaned back in her chair and folded her arms. "She's makin' supper and she couldn't very well let it. I'm sorry."

"Let it *what*? Oh, yes, you mean leave it. Excuse me—"

"Och, that's all right. Did you read in the paper"—she adroitly led the conversation, with no regard for a sequence of ideas, away from her step-daughter—"how the Christian Church members is protestin' against them nekked statues at the State capitol? Ain't it scand'lous what the world's comin' to?"

"It certainly is if people can't look at nude marble! They'd better forbid the Christmas display of nude dolls or dressed turkeys!"

"Yes, well, but," Mrs. Miller said, looking a bit bewildered, "that's different, too, again."

"Is it?"

"Well, ain't it?"

"It is if you think it is. It all depends upon your point of view."

"Well, me, I'm awful funny about

them things," Mrs. Miller explained expansively. "I ain't like some—I don't mind lookin' at 'em at all."

"You'd be 'awful funny' if you *did*."

"You think? Well, here one day last summer I went along to Harrisburg over—with my cousin and her husband—and when we went to the capitol, I just wanted to *see* them statues—so I just looked!"

"You were courageous."

"Yes, ain't? Well, you can't see such things at Adamstown, so I just looked. To be sure I had ashamed a little before my cousin's husband! You couldn't have *hired* him to look! But the Christian people of Harrisburg insists they got to cover them indecent statues."

"Will you be so very kind, Mrs. Miller, as to let me see Miss Miller for just a few minutes?"

Mrs. Miller rocked slowly. "She couldn't so well let the supper."

"I won't keep her five minutes."

"You see, she's makin' sausage and fried potatoes, and she can't let 'em or they'd burn fur her."

"May I go into the kitchen, then, and speak with her? I have so little free time I shan't be able to come again very soon—and I especially want to see her."

"It don't suit just so well, Miss Jenkins."

Beatrice sank back limply in her chair and regarded her hostess thoughtfully.

"If it's particular," Mrs. Miller added pleasantly, "I can give Mattie your message."

"It *is* particular. I really must see her."

"What about is it you want to see her?"

"I'll tell *her*, Mrs. Miller, please, and she will tell you if she thinks it best to."

"It's a pity it don't suit to-day."

"When, then, *may* I see her? Let me make a definite appointment, so that

I don't waste time again coming here to no purpose."

"Us, we can't leave Mattie git in with no lady friend, Miss Jenkins. She has to do the work—seein' she's livin' here on her pop. She can't go runnin'!"

"Well," said Beatrice resignedly, deciding to resort to guile, "if I can't see her, will you tell Mr. Oliver that I'd like to see *him* for a minute before I go?"

Mrs. Miller looked doubtful. "I don't know if he's in or no."

"Will you kindly find out?"

Mrs. Miller regarded her caller in great uncertainty. "Well," she slowly consented. She rose very deliberately, and crossed the room to the hall, casting back one last suspicious glance as she disappeared.

Beatrice listened to her footsteps mounting the stairs, then made a dash for the back of the house in search of the kitchen.

"I'd die before I'd lose my wager with Mr. Oliver that I'd *see* Mattie!" she thought.

Oliver, in the meantime, dealing with Mattie in the kitchen, was finding her almost as difficult as Beatrice had found Mrs. Miller.

"I'd rather not go in the parlor, Mr. Oliver," she pleaded. "Emmy makes me so ashamed before folks."

"Miss Jenkins came to see *you*, though, Mattie, not your stepmother."

"But I'm not dressed fit, and Emmy won't like it if I go in."

"I understand it's embarrassing for you—the way Mrs. Miller mortifies you—but, Mattie, Miss Jenkins hopes to help you to a situation."

"A situation!" The girl's eyes shone for an instant, then drooped again. "But I couldn't leave Uncle Jo now. He needs me so."

"I know he needs you. But they'll not *let* you stay here, you know, if you continue to disobey them by waiting on Uncle Jo."

"Until they do turn me out, Mr. Oliver, I'm going to stay with Uncle Jo. He can't get along without me. He won't live long—and I can help him, Mr. Oliver. And," she continued, with a look of resolution in her eyes that quite transformed the usual blank hopelessness of her face, "if Emmy and my father tell me I must go—I'll refuse to—while Uncle Jo needs me. They won't dare put me out if I say I won't go, for they're afraid of what people would say. When Uncle Jo no longer needs me—well, then, I'm going, if I have to sleep on the road!"

"Very well, Mattie." Oliver resigned himself to her decision. "Count on me to help you put it through. And when you are free," he suddenly told her, taking her hand in his, "I'm going to take you to a hospital and have you cured!"

"Oh, Mr. Oliver!"

"But I do wish Miss Jenkins could meet you for a few minutes to-day. I want you two to know each other. She's a fine little woman!"

"But don't you see, Mr. Oliver, that Miss Jenkins and I couldn't get acquainted with each other before *Emmy*? I'd like to do what you ask, just because you ask me, but——"

It was at this moment that the door between the kitchen and the dining room was cautiously opened, and Miss Jenkins appeared on the threshold. Lifting a finger for silence and softly closing the door behind her, she tiptoed into the room. Her face was flushed, her eyes sparkling.

"Mrs. Miller has gone upstairs to look for *you*!" she hastily whispered to the astonished Oliver. "Run up and head her off!" she ordered like a major general. "And give me a chance to talk to Miss Miller."

Oliver, not even waiting to present the two girls to each other, hurried away to obey orders, chuckling in-

wardly at being thus "managed" by his subordinate.

Mattie pushed her sizzling pans to the back of the stove, and, offering her visitor a chair, sat down before her, her face bright with the excitement of this unwonted episode in her dull routine. A visit from a girl of her own age! An educated girl who had even been to college! A girl who had the rare, wonderful good fortune to work daily with Mr. Oliver and to be approved of by him! Mattie, awed and shy, yet fascinated, hung on the very sound of her voice.

Beatrice tried to make good use of the short time vouchsafed to her. She discussed the possibilities of a kindergarten course, trained nursing, domestic science, bookkeeping.

"But it all costs, and I have no money. That's the trouble," Mattie explained.

"And I understand your father wouldn't help you?" Beatrice inquired.

"Oh, no; he wouldn't spend any for me. He wants me to earn."

"Don't worry about that part of it," Beatrice said reassuringly. "We'll take care of that. I'll write to my mother. The way will be found. Meantime, you and I must become acquainted with each other. We must have some walks and talks together."

"Oh," breathed Mattie, "I'd love to, but—I never get out any—and now that Uncle Jo is here——"

And Mattie proceeded to explain what she had just affirmed to Oliver—her determination to stay right here so long as the dying man needed her.

"Couldn't you at least get away in the evening once a week to hear my suffrage talks in the high school?" Beatrice rather wistfully urged.

She recognized in Mattie, with a sense of exhilaration, a possible disciple, an unformed mind that would be eagerly open to her fervent ideals, theories, convictions. All through her col-

leg^e days Beatrice had had, not friends, but followers, devotees, to whom she was a prophetess. A relation of this sort was manna to her. She was scarcely capable of friendship—a give-and-take between equals. So the bare possibility of the relation she saw she might have with Mattie thrilled her.

"Mr. Oliver would bring you to my evening talks," she urged, with a sublime confidence in the principal's burning desire to hear her speeches.

Mattie flushed at the suggestion. "I—I never kept company," she faltered.

"Kept company?" Beatrice repeated, puzzled.

"If Mr. Oliver would see me safe home, the neighbors would all say we kept company."

"I see. Well, why need you care?"

"I wouldn't care."

"Well, then?"

"But he mightn't like it."

"Don't bother about him!"

"I would love to hear your lecture. It seems so wonderful to me that you could speak to an audience! But I don't see how I could leave Uncle Jo for a whole evening."

"I suppose you couldn't," Beatrice admitted, disappointed.

"And, Miss Jenkins," Mattie added, her color deepening, "I have only working clothes. I can't go anywhere."



It was at this moment that the door was cautiously opened and Miss Jenkins appeared on the threshold.

Beatrice repressed her impulse to offer at once to supply this need. She knew of course that she could not suggest such a thing to Mattie yet.

It was by a process mysteriously obscure to both of these young girls that their talk soon swung around to the subject of Mr. Oliver—and did not depart from that point. Mattie timidly, but eagerly, asked many questions as to the rumors circulating in the village about his peculiar, but delightful, methods of teaching; his very original ways of governing; his independent attitude toward the board of directors.

Beatrice saw that the girl was hungry and thirsty for every crumb and every drop she could gather about this being, to her so wonderful; and, somehow, Mattie's state of mind found a response, of a sort, in Beatrice's own heart. She discovered herself presently talking in a most animated way of the principal's unusualness, his "many excellent qualities."

"He has, of course, his limitations," she finally tempered her commendation of him. "I think his nature needs to deepen—he's just a little bit trivial sometimes. And he has certainly not made the most of his abilities. He has lacked ambition. His literary appreciations, too, though occasionally very fine and keen, are now and then peculiarly lacking. The light way, for instance, that he takes my great favorite, so earnest a writer as Edward O. Potter, *irritates me!*"

"He lent *me* one of Potter's novels," Mattie responded.

"He owns one of them, does he?"

"He has eight of them in his book-case."

"Why, he told me he never read Potter when he could find anything else to read!"

"I think, from some things I heard Mr. Oliver say already, that he doesn't like Potter's books so very much."

"I know he doesn't." Beatrice shrugged. "It shows awfully poor taste, really."

"But I think he couldn't help liking the one I'm reading now."

"Which one is that?"

"Its title is 'The Wise Fool.' Somehow it *reminds* me of Mr. Oliver. I don't know why"—Mattie's brow puckered into a look of perplexity—"but it seems, while I'm reading, as if Mr. Oliver were talking to me."

"How odd!" Beatrice smiled patiently at the child's vagary.

"Did you read it already?"

"Certainly."

"And didn't it remind *you* of Mr. Oliver?"

"I read it before I knew Mr. Oliver. Of all Potter's novels it is the one with the most atmosphere," pronounced Beatrice.

"'Atmosphere?'" repeated Mattie vaguely. "Oh!" Her face lighted up. "I know what you mean! And that's why it reminds me of Mr. Oliver. People and books do have what seems like an 'atmosphere,' don't they? And when I'm reading 'The Wise Fool,' I feel just as if Mr. Oliver was in the room. Read it over again, Miss Jenkins, and see if you don't feel that way. Mr. Oliver will lend it to you when I'm through it."

"I have it. But I'm afraid, my dear, that the subtle, exquisite atmosphere of that remarkable novel could never suggest to me the personality of our very nice and worthy high-school principal."

"Subtle and exquisite atmosphere!" Mattie repeated, her countenance glowing. "It's wonderful, Miss Jenkins, the way you know just the right words to describe things! Yes, Mr. Oliver's atmosphere does seem to me just so subtle and exquisite."

"Dear me!" thought Beatrice, rather appalled. "But she's 'got it bad'!"

At this instant a sound above them, a loud thumping on the floor of an upper room, sent the color from Mattie's face. She sprang to her feet.

"It's Uncle Jo! Excuse me!" And flying to the stairway leading up from the kitchen, she was gone before Beatrice could think.

The latter, left alone, sat still, listened, hesitated. There was a rushing to and fro in the room above and a sound of moaning.

"She might need help. I'd better go up to her!" Beatrice thought.

Running lightly up the stairs to a narrow, dark hall, she located the door from which the moaning seemed to

come, and, hurrying to it, she softly knocked, then opened it.

CHAPTER XVII.

The chamber in which she found herself gave her such a shock of surprise that for a moment she stood spellbound. The shock came from the great contrast between this apartment and the parlor below—this book-lined room with its fine mahogany furniture, its good pictures, good rugs, coziness, good taste.

But, of course, Mr. Oliver's room—furnished by himself! Even so, it was astonishing. She had had sufficient experience at college of circumstances other than her own to know that a room like this represented, or at least suggested, a certain social stratum. Did Mr. Oliver, perhaps, come from good people? He did really rather bear the stamp of it.

Where was he just now? What had he done with that mule, Mrs. Miller? If he could manage a woman like that as well as creatures like Sam Dietz, he was clever! How almost pathetically Mattie betrayed her admiration of him—or adoration rather! And, of course, he was too poor to marry, even supposing he reciprocated the girl's ardor.

She turned away at last to look again for the invalid's room. But the hall was silent now, and she was afraid to experiment with any more doors.

While she waited in uncertainty, Mattie suddenly appeared, coming quietly out from the room adjoining Mr. Oliver's. She looked white and worried.

"He's over it now, and resting," she whispered. "His attacks are awful—and every one 'worse than the last.'"

"Of course I see, Miss Miller," said Beatrice as they went downstairs together, "that there's nothing much to be done for you while your uncle is like this. But I shall hope to see you now and then."

"It's a wonder," said Mattie wistfully, "that you'd want to see me—I'm so dumb."

"But I want you for a friend," said Beatrice impetuously, feeling at the same moment a little thrill at her own democratic, unprejudiced, and large-minded spirit.

In the kitchen they shook hands and parted, and Beatrice returned to the parlor.

Oliver, meantime, having run up from the kitchen and encountered Mrs. Miller at the door of his room, had been informed by her that Miss Jenkins waited in the parlor to see him, and knowing that the moment he was out of sight Mrs. Miller would be on Mattie's trail and interrupt the conference between the two girls in the kitchen, he enticed her to return to the parlor with him, though what he would do with her when he got her there he left to Providence.

"You know, Mrs. Miller, Miss Jenkins came to see you, too, so you'd better come downstairs with me. You see, she's planning to give some suffrage talks in the high school and she wants your support."

"Support?" repeated Mrs. Miller suspiciously as she preceded him down the front stairs. "What fur support?"

"Your sympathy and coöperation," he explained. "And," he hastily elucidated as, entering the parlor, Mrs. Miller manifested her chagrin at discovering it empty, "Mattie's support, too. The more the merrier, when it comes to a suffrage rally, you know," he went on idiotically, saying anything to hold her here. "Of course you're for suffrage, Mrs. Miller? All ladies of—"

"Where's she at?" Mrs. Miller, looking ominously pale and quiet, demanded.

"Drumming up an audience for her lecture. You'll go, won't you? It will be quite a swell event for Adamstown, and you can have the honor of being

an usher, Mrs. Miller, or a patroness, if——”

“Did she go out there to Mattie in the kitchen?”

“I couldn’t really say. See!” he exclaimed, picking up the sable coat from the back of a chair. “Feel this fur! Isn’t it beautiful? Beautiful!” he repeated as he deliberately took her hand and ran it over the lovely surface of the long coat.

“It’s awful queer lookin’,” Mrs. Miller, momentarily diverted, responded as she carefully examined it. “I don’t think it’s very stylish.”

“Isn’t it? You would, of course, be a better judge of that than I. It would be wonderfully becoming to *you*, Mrs. Miller.”

“Leave me try it on once.”

“Oh”—he hastily laid it aside—“I wouldn’t do that if I were you. See here! I’ve often wanted to ask you—who is this?”

He pointed to a small, framed print of Shakespeare that stood on the mantelpiece. He often had wondered how it had come there.

“I don’t know who that is,” she answered. “It was left to me by a lady friend that died. But they say,” she added, taking it down and inspecting it with him, “that he was such a good writer.”

“Yes?” said Oliver, holding one corner of the picture while she held the other. “A good writer, they say?”

“Yes, a wonderful good writer.”

“It’s Shakespeare, Mrs. Miller. William Shakespeare.”

“Shakespeare!”

“The greatest poet that ever lived.”

“Oh, a poet, is he?”

“Was. He’s dead.”

“So? Yes.” She shook her head dolefully. “I heard a’ready that it’s awful hard on the constitution—them things—writin’ poetry and book knowledge. It goes so to the brain, they say. Was he dead long a’ready?”

“More than three hundred years.”

“Now to think! Nearly back in Bible times, ain’t? It ‘most makes a body feel creepy to have his picture on the mantel settin’!”

She replaced it with manifestly a new respect for it, then turned toward the door.

“But”—he quickly stopped her—“you’ve not told me yet whether you will support the Adamstown suffrage movement?”

She paused and looked at him uncertainly. “Suffrage! Do you mean that Miss Jenkins is one of these here that’s fur women’s wotin’?”

“Yes.”

Mrs. Miller shook her head. “I never seen nothin’ in the Bible yet, Mr. Oliver, about women’s wotin’.”

“Electric lights and automobiles don’t have any scriptural sanction, either,” he sadly admitted. If he could get her discussing theology—

“Oh, well, but, Mr. Oliver, that’s some different again!”

“Do you think so?” he earnestly inquired.

“Why, to be sure. Everybody has automobiles and electric lights that otherwise *kin*.”

“Yes,” he granted.

And say, Mr. Oliver! I read in the paper how such a suffragette in England or wherever, once she up and throwed a stone and broke a window!”

“Now where did you see that?”

“Here last week a’ready in our *Weekly Intelligencer*. And anyhow, Mr. Oliver, I don’t believe her complexion’s natural.”

“What! Whose?”

“Miss Jenkinses. Missus at the hotel, she says she believes she’s always makin’ up her face! And she says, too, she misoverheard her telephonin’ an order to Philadelphia, mind you, fur some things, and one of ‘em was such a complexion powder. Yes, to think! Ain’t she expensive, though, telephonin’

to Philadelphia yet! Missus says it's seventy-five cents to telephone to Philadelphia. Missus says she spends money awful reckless. I pity the man that gits her."

"Oh, but her beautiful color is perfectly natural!" protested Oliver a bit indignantly.

Mrs. Miller smiled insinuatingly. "Don't it come off when you kiss her?"

Before he could reply, the parlor door opened, and Beatrice walked into the room.

"I've been enlisting Mrs. Miller's support," Oliver spoke at once, "for your suffrage talks, Miss Jenkins."

"Thank you. I hope, Mrs. Miller, that you'll come, and bring all your friends."

"Was you astin' Mattie, too?" Mrs. Miller inquired, a little icy gleam coming into her eyes that seemed oddly at variance with the oversweetness of her mouth.

"Yes," answered Beatrice complacently, "but she can't leave her sick uncle."

"He ain't her uncle," Mrs. Miller blandly insisted. "She ain't got the dare to call him hern. You see, she just wants to show off that way to git in with you the way she tries to git in with Mr. Oliver, too. She does it to spite me. Yes, she even tries to git in with my own little boy—and my own brother fur the presents she kin git off of him. A body could hardly believe how mean actin' she is. But Mr. Oliver, he kin tell you if it ain't so, what I say."

"But he and I don't gossip," responded Beatrice, almost embarrassed at such an indecently frank exposure of the family skeleton. "You will come to my lecture, won't you?"

"Yes, well, but I don't know either if I could understand it. You and Mr. Oliver is so book learnt toward what I am—fur all I was to a normal school fur a year, too. But then I don't talk

Greek like Mr. Oliver does. Yes, you do, too, talk Greek, Mr. Oliver; you know you do." She answered what she took for a murmured protest of modesty on his part. "You needn't deny it. He knows so much that way," she explained, "it gives a body a shamed face to be around him."

"I should think it might, when he talks Greek to you," Beatrice retorted.

"And," added Mrs. Miller expansively as Oliver held the sable coat for her visitor, "his book learnin' seems to make him take sich interest in studyin' human nature, too, that way. He's always writin' down in sich a little notebook—ain't, you are?" She turned to him for a confirmation of her account of his eccentric ways. "And he says, still, them's his reflections on human nature he's writin' down. My mister, now, he don't take no notice to human nature. But I think it's nice to study it. Don't you, Miss Jenkins?"

"The proper study of mankind is man," said Beatrice ponderously. "But, Mrs. Miller, I assure you you'll understand every word I shall say on Friday night. And I promise not to talk Greek."

They had reached the front porch during this dialogue, and Beatrice, finding that in Mr. Oliver's presence Mrs. Miller's conversation proved rather a strain upon her gravity, took her leave somewhat abruptly.

Oliver walked with her to the gate, and, as Mrs. Miller went indoors again, Beatrice turned about and confronted him.

"Wouldn't you kill yourself if you had as mean a disposition as that?" She nodded toward the house.

"She does have more meanness to the square inch," he agreed, "than any one I've ever had the misfortune—or perhaps good fortune—to know."

"Why 'good fortune,' in Heaven's name? She's *poison*!"

"She's a curious study, however."

"So it's *her* 'human nature' you're so fond of 'studyin' '?" She smiled. "I shouldn't suppose you'd find it worth while."

"Do you think the human creature exists that *isn't* worth studying?"

"I prefer to forget all I ever knew of people like Mrs. Miller."

"We've got to have shadows, though, as well as high lights, you know, in any picture."

"But we're not artists. That would be another story."

"Yes—of course it would. How did you make out with Mattie?" He changed the subject precipitately.

"She's lovely! I got into real touch with her at once. She's so responsive! I've already adopted her as a friend."

Instinctively Beatrice looked to see such generous patronage applauded. She had not yet grown used to her rôle; to the novelty of being treated without any special deference; of having her friendship regarded as anything less than a gracious gift of her magnanimity.

But Oliver took it calmly. "Of course you have. I knew you would. I congratulate you. To have Mattie's friendship is to have something very worth while, Miss Jenkins."

Well, of course he did not know—but how green he must be not to have discerned that she was not just what she seemed! Why, he seemed to make scarcely any distinction between her and Mattie! In spite of his external polish, he must have had no social experience at all outside of these villages where he taught, except his college life.

"I should think," she said experimentally, "you'd find it a bit difficult to actually *live* with this family."

"Well, you see, there's Mattie. She's my compensation."

"Ah! Well—good-by!"

She was gone, and Oliver watched her as she moved away into the dim twilight out of sight. How she carried

herself! That proud poise of her small dark head, that light, graceful step—American women of her class—the capable, unaffected, honest, and sometimes very intelligent middle class—did certainly carry it off, with their fine spirit of independence, of self-respect.

Meantime, all the way home, Beatrice's blood was beating with the refrain: "There's Mattie—she's my compensation!"

She felt strangely tired, for her, by the time she reached the hotel—and irritable and out of sorts generally. Her room looked lonesome, desolate. She thought of the cozy cheer of Mr. Oliver's combined study and bedroom, and her bosom swelled with a longing, a sort of nostalgia, not for her mother's home, but for the home that she had never known and that all her life she had craved—a home where her affections might find a resting place. For Beatrice was far too much a woman, too passionately warm at heart, to find completeness in the mere working out of her ambitions.

CHAPTER XVIII.

As Oliver reentered the house, he came full upon a little domestic scene between Mattie and her stepmother that proved eventually to be the turning point of their strained relations.

They were standing in the narrow front hall, Mattie nervously putting on a shabby black coat and Mrs. Miller protesting that she must not leave the house.

"Uncle Jo's whisky is all, and he dare not be without any," Mattie was urging.

"You ain't to go. It's supper time and your table ain't set. If Jo has money fur whisky, he kin pay us his board. You take off that there coat and go back to your work, Mattie."

Oliver strolled into the parlor, where their voices still reached him.



"Oh!" gasped Mattie. "Give it to me! He hasn't got but a little money! Just about enough to pay for his whisky till—till he dies!"

"I'll hurry home again. It won't take but a minute to run to Slabaugh's and back."

"You ain't to go. Now you mind to me!"

"I can't risk Uncle Jo's having an attack and no whisky in the house," Mattie returned, a note of resolution in her voice.

"It ain't respectable, a young girl buyin' whisky yet! What'll Slabaugh's think of you? And Jo ain't no rela-

tion to you. You're to mind to your own affairs!"

Mattie, taking her black hat from the rack, laid the whisky flask and a five-dollar bill upon the hall table while she hastily pinned the hat on her head.

Quick as a flash Mrs. Miller seized the money.

"Now," she cried softly, "you can't buy it! Jo owes me this here fur his board. If he's got money, he's got to pay his board. Me and your pop," she

continued, while Mattie, white with consternation, and Oliver, coming to the parlor door, both gazed at her in a sort of fascinated amazement at the lengths to which she could go, "me and your pop ain't the ones to set by and see others livin' off of us and then defyin' us!"

"Oh!" gasped Mattie. "Give it to me! He hasn't got but a little money! Just about enough to pay for his whisky till—till he dies! Give it to me, Emmy!"

"Indeed'n I ain't doin' nothin' of the kind. You go make your supper." And with a complacent smirk of satisfaction, she turned away and started upstairs.

Mattie, her bosom heaving, despair in her eyes, turned to Oliver.

"Give me the bottle!" he said.

He took it from her trembling hand, reached for his hat from the rack, and left the house.

"I wish," he thought grimly as he walked to the drug store, "that for just about five minutes Mrs. John Miller were a man, so that I could make her sore all over with my foot! Ha! Wouldn't I enjoy myself!"

The family were gathering about the supper table when he returned. Mattie, coming into the dining room with a steaming platter of sausage, looked at him eagerly as she set it down.

"Here's the whisky, Mattie," he publicly announced, taking the flask from his pocket and passing it across the table to her.

"Thank you, Mr. Oliver!" she exclaimed softly, and the look in her eyes held his own hanging upon her for a moment.

"If you want to be so soft, Mr. Oliver," spoke John Miller as he helped Johnny, at his side, to a piece of sausage, "that's your own affairs. Me, I ain't buyin' no whisky fur other ones when I can't afford it fur myself."

Oliver, seating himself and reaching for the sausage, made no answer.

"Yes, if others kin afford sich things, that ain't none of our business," Mrs. Miller mildly added.

"What neither you nor I can afford," said Oliver, "is to be—murderers!"

"But us, we're temperance!" protested John hotly. "You kin read in the Bible: 'Touch not, handle not, taste not.'"

"He'd better die sober than go before his Gawd full of whisky," said Mrs. Miller.

The picture of Uncle Jo staggering before Jehovah's awful throne held Oliver's mental vision for an instant.

"This here ends it," said John firmly. "After supper I'm tellin' Joseph he has to find another boardin' place. We'll see how quick other ones will take him in free! To-morrow, a'ready, he goes."

"Oh, father!" broke from Mattie.

"And you, too, if you say much," he gruffly told her.

"But if he's too sick to go! And where will he go?"

"That certainly ain't my affairs. If he has too sick to go hisself, I send him to the Lancaster poorhouse hospital. They'll come and fetch him. To-morrow," John repeated, bringing his hand down upon the table, "he gits out."

Mattie's pallid distress during the rest of the meal kept Oliver silent, and indeed Johnny was the only one in the room who found anything to say.

As later that night Oliver sat reading in his room, the murmur of the talking that came to him from behind the closed door of the adjoining bedroom acquainted him with the fact that Mr. Miller was carrying out his threat and notifying the dying man that on the morrow he must move on.

Oliver spent a restless night, wondering, even in his dreams, where Joseph would go when he was turned out; how long the little money he had

would last; how Mattie would take his eviction.

At breakfast next morning—he breakfasted alone on school days at eight o'clock, the family meal being at six—Mattie's tear-stained face as she waited upon him told him that John Miller and his wife had not relented.

"Is Uncle Jo going away, then, Mattie?"

She nodded without speaking, her lips quivering.

"Do you know where?"

"He don't know what *to do!* He isn't able to go far."

"Do you know how much money he *has?*"

"He didn't tell me. But"—she put her hand into the bosom of her gown, drew forth a five-dollar bill, and laid it on the table—"he told me to pay you this, Mr. Oliver, for the whisky you got him, and he thanks you."

Oliver pushed it away. "Give it back to him. They had nothing but a cheap, poor brand at the drug store. I'll go to Lancaster soon and get him some of the right sort, and— But he won't be *here!* When does he leave?"

"Some time to-day."

Oliver stirred his coffee thoughtfully. "I'll hurry home at noon, Mattie, and see what I can do. We've got to look after Uncle Jo!"

"Thank you, Mr. Oliver," she returned, but her tone was hopeless.

Mrs. Miller, entering the room just here—stealthily, so that she was almost beside them before they saw her—put an end to their talk. Mattie went at once to the kitchen, and Oliver, his appetite gone, pushed away his eggs, and left the table.

But a surprise awaited him when, at the end of the morning session, he came back for his dinner. Mrs. Miller was not, as usual, taking her ease in a rocking-chair by the dining-room window; the dinner table was not set; the room was empty, save for Johnny sprawling

on the floor, his face buried in his chubby arms, his little frame shaken with suppressed sobbing. There seemed to be a peculiar silence in the house.

"What's the matter, Mr. Boy? Where's your mother?"

"Cookin' dinner."

"Your *mother* cooking! Why, where's Mattie?"

"She's *went!*" sobbed Johnny, and Oliver started as if he had been struck.

"Went where?" he quickly asked.

"With Uncle Jo. And she didn't take *me!*" he wailed. "I want to go, too! I want my Mattie!"

Oliver, his face gone suddenly white, hurried to the kitchen.

Mrs. Miller, looking disheveled and tired, stood before the cookstove. An odor of scorched turnips filled the air, and the liver in her pan was black, hard, and dry.

"Well?" he demanded. He could scarcely trust himself to speak to her.

She looked up smilingly. "I'm some late with dinner, ain't? I'll be through all, right soon now, though, Mr. Oliver."

"Damn dinner! Where's Mattie?"

"Please, Mr. Oliver, I wouldn't want fur Johnny to hear you use them expressions! I'm trying to bring him up a little refined."

"Where's Mattie?"

"I'm sure I don't know."

"When will she be back?"

"I ain't expectin' her back."

"She has gone with your brother?"

"Yes, she *did.* I *tole* her it didn't look right—him and her goin' off together when they ain't related. Folks will talk."

"Where did they go?"

"They didn't say."

"Are their things all gone, or will they be back again for them?"

"Neither of 'em had much. Mattie packed her things in Joseph's trunk. Ain't it indecent? Silas Groff took the trunk away in his grocery wagon," she

added, trying in vain to conceal her satisfaction at having at last got rid of her stepdaughter—the domestic drudgery that would devolve upon herself in consequence being a small price to pay for the subtle joy of having routed the object of her maternal jealousy and of her deep-seated hate. "I don't know where they went to, *I'm sure*. Mister, he's awful ashamed fur his daughter actin' like this—goin' off with an old fellah like Joseph and one that *drinks* yet! Mister certainly never thought Mattie would turn out *immoral*! But me, I always suspected it was *in her tol!*"

"They left no message for me?"

"No, sir."

"How long ago did they leave?"

"About an hour or so."

Oliver suddenly remembered, with an immense relief, that at Adamstown there were only two trains and two stagecoaches a day—one at eight o'clock in the morning, the other at six in the evening, so the fugitives must still be in town.

Could they have gone down to the Swan?

Unmindful of his dinner, he hurried out of the house to try to find them.

He decided to go first to Groff's Groceries-Boots-Shoes-Notions-Confections to inquire of Silas Groff where he had hauled their trunk.

It was only a few minutes' walk, and as he opened the shop door and went in, there, to his astonishment, he saw none other than Mattie herself, standing at the counter buying groceries. She wore no hat, and was dressed in her everyday calico working frock and gingham apron. The face she turned to him wore a look he had never seen in it before—a bright, eager, joyous look; the look, almost, of the gay adventurer her stepmother pronounced her—or of a child let out from the bondage of school; of a patient released

from a hospital; of any captive thing made suddenly free.

"I'm out looking for you!" he exclaimed. "Where are you? Where is Uncle Jo? Explain, Mattie!"

"I was going to walk down to the high school this afternoon to tell you." She smiled radiantly, and he felt the color flow back into his own face as he beheld her once more before him, after that momentary shock of fear that she had gone beyond his reach. It had been a shock—he was deeply conscious of that fact. "I'll tell you everything outside," she whispered.

He gathered up her groceries and followed her out of the store.

"Uncle Jo and I have gone to house-keeping together!" she radiantly explained as they walked through the street. "In that little empty house at Herr's Corner."

Oliver's astonishment held him speechless.

"You see, it was this way, Mr. Oliver. This morning, when I was packing Uncle Jo's trunk—and crying—he just told me to fetch my things, too—that he couldn't get along without me and that I'd better come along; that we'd make out somehow. And so I just suddenly made up my mind I would go with him, and I'd ask you and Miss Jenkins to help me get him to a Lancaster hospital and then I'd try once more to get work in Lancaster, where I could see him now and then and know if he was treated right at the hospital. But no sooner had we gone out of my father's house together than Uncle Jo told me he had some money. He has *two hundred dollars!*" she said with awe. "And he handed it over to me to use for our housekeeping until—until he leaves me for good and all, Mr. Oliver."

Oliver quickly reflected that this sum in Mattie's economical hands would no doubt outlast the few weeks Uncle Jo had to live.

"And then he explained to me," Mattie continued, "how the day he had come to Adamstown and had seen the way his sister felt about his coming to her, he had made up his mind that, without telling any one, he would just go quietly and rent that little house at Herr's Corner and have it furnished, so it would be ready any time he decided to leave his sister's. If Emmy had been good to him, he *would* have paid her for keeping him."

"He *furnished* the house at Herr's Corner?" inquired Oliver dubiously.

"Well, of course very cheap and plain, with only just what we would *have* to have—a stove, a table, some chairs, and two beds—and then some towels and bedding. You see, he had made out to himself that he would ask me to come and keep house for him. He was sure I *would* go^{*} with him, for he saw how they didn't want me at home. He had got Silas Groff to attend to everything for him. And only think, Mr. Oliver, when I left my father's house with Uncle Jo this morning, I didn't know about this at all! I didn't know he had any money but about ten dollars or so! And here he had two hundred dollars left after furnishing the house and paying Silas for his work!

"At first I was afraid to handle such a big sum as two hundred dollars. I never saw so much money before. It made Uncle Jo laugh to see me afraid to take it. Oh, Mr. Oliver"—she laughed happily—"it was such a surprise to me when Uncle Jo showed me the home he had ready for him and me! And then," she added gravely, "I can't tell you how it makes me feel to get away from—from Emmy!—to be where I'm *wanted* and—and liked so much as Uncle Jo likes me—to be where no one will make me ashamed or humiliated!"

"Of course," after a moment's pause she went on, "it's hard to leave Johnny.

I don't know how I can stand not to see him. And he will fret for me so! Emmy won't leave him come to see me, I know—and they won't ever leave me come home again. Well"—she drew a long breath—"it had to come some time—the breaking away from Johnny. I could stand it better if I didn't know how he'll feel. You can see, Mr. Oliver, why I'm so fond of Johnny—when he was the only person at home that didn't want to get rid of me."

Never had he heard Mattie speak at such length as this. He gazed at her glowing face and marveled how a few hours of freedom had so stimulated her; had, in this sudden reaction from repression, swung her off on a wide tangent in which her soul had seemed to spring to life, to an undreamed-of capacity for happiness. He felt an impulse to grasp and hold her back to the orbit in which he knew her, lest she escape altogether out of his ken.

"Have you thought, Mattie, at all of the future—of what you will do when Uncle Jo is gone?"

She walked in silence at his side for a moment. "Not much," she finally answered. "Because, you see, I *had* to come with him, anyway, no matter what it might lead to. Don't you think perhaps Miss Jenkins may help me to get some position? She said she would. Oh, Mr. Oliver!" She turned to him with a fresh ripple of delight. "Miss Jenkins *can* come to see me now! When my work is done and Uncle Jo is resting, I can do whatever I want to now! Miss Jenkins asked me to be her friend—and now I can be! I never had a girl friend in my life. For six years I haven't dared to ask any one to come to see me or to go to see any one. Even if Emmy had let me, she always made me so ashamed before everybody!"

"What she said to people only made them despise her, Mattie. She's the



The face she turned to him wore a look he had never seen in it before—a bright, eager, joyous look.

most transparently deceitful person I ever saw in my life."

Mattie seemed to weigh this remark thoughtfully.

"'Transparently deceitful!'" she repeated slowly. "That's just the kind of contradictory expressions Edward O. Potter uses in his books. Yes, I told Miss Jenkins that all the time I'm reading one of Edward O. Potter's books it seems to me as if you were talking to me, Mr. Oliver. Isn't that queer?"

That she should intuitively know him like that! No wonder that from the first hour he had known her he had felt with her an almost uncanny sense of intimacy, of harmony.

"And what," he asked, "did Miss Jenkins say to that?"

"She said," Mattie quite simply repeated Miss Jenkins' words, "'I'm afraid, my dear, that the subtle, exquisite atmosphere of Potter's remarkable novels could never suggest to me the personality of our nice and worthy

high-school principal.' You see," added Mattie, "Miss Jenkins has a high respect for you."

"Nice and worthy!" Oliver grinned. "Oh, won't I get even with her some day!"

Mattie looked up in surprise. "Get even?" But why, Mr. Oliver?"

"To be 'worthy,' Mattie, is the next thing to being respectable."

"But don't you want to be considered respectable?" inquired Mattie, greatly puzzled.

"To be respectable, my child, is to be commonplace."

Again Mattie, with puckered brow, earnestly considered his epigram.

"And, Mattie," he abruptly asked, "you'll let me, too, come to see you and Uncle Jo? I'll steal Johnny some day and bring him to see you."

"Oh!" She could only breathe her happiness—it beggared words.

They reached, at this moment, the little old cottage at Herr's Corner, and Mattie received from his hands her groceries. "Uncle Jo said I was to tell you, Mr. Oliver, when I saw you, that he would like to have a talk with you as soon as you can spare the time. He says it's very important."

"I'll be in after school."

"By that time I'll be all fixed. There isn't much to do, for Uncle Jo had the house all clean and ready! Will you take supper with us?" she timidly invited him, the flush in her face deepening a little. "I'll make you some pancakes and good strong coffee the way you like it."

"With that 'extra spoonful for the pot' that Mrs. Miller wouldn't let you use when she knew it? I'll come!"

"And will you," she asked wistfully, "please bring me a book to read? You know," her bosom swelling, her eyes limpid with light, "I can read all I want to now whenever I have time. For the first time in six years"—there was a note of incredulity in her voice—"I can

sit down and read without knowing I'll be stopped and the book taken from me. What will it feel like?"

"What shall I bring you? Command me!"

"Another of Edward O. Potter's works."

"You flatter me—him!" he amended. "Mattie, I'm going to make you a present of Potter's 'works'—a complete set. Well"—he held out his hand to her—"you must go to Uncle Jo now, and I must be off. Good-by."

They shook hands rather lingeringly, and he went away.

Feeling hungry by this time, and knowing he could no more eat the hard, dry liver and burned turnips his landlady would give him than he could stand her society—even to "study the human nature" that was in her—he decided to go for his dinner to the Swan. Perhaps he would have the good luck to have his dinner with Miss Jenkins. He was eager to tell her of this new stage in the fortunes of Mattie.

He considered, as he walked, how he might "get back at her" for that "nice and worthy." He rather despised himself for the way it pricked. The idea of being sensitive about what a village school-teacher thought of one!

Stopping at the post office for his mail, he found a letter from Archibald Starr, containing the surprising announcement that he would be in Adams-town by the six-o'clock stage on Friday.

"I've got something to tell you, Ed, that will take away your breath. Aunt Pauline—Mrs. Gardner, of Boston, you know—has suddenly, with her usual eccentric abruptness, decided that my 'artistic talent' is of an order above 'mere illustrating,' and she's going to give me the wherewithal for as many years of study in Paris as I shall need to make me a portrait painter. You know what a chance this gives me to realize my long-cherished ambitions! I'm dizzy at the prospect and can't write coherently,

so I'm going to run over or down or up—whatever it is—to Adamstown to see you. It isn't on the map, but I'll discover it. I'll sail for Paris directly after Christmas. Ain't it bully, Ed?"

Oliver's satisfaction for his friend was not unmixed with a sense of personal loss. But he consoled himself with the reflection that at least he would have Baldy's society in Paris during his own summers there.

He wondered, as he folded the letter and put it into his breast pocket, "what the devil" Miss Jenkins—in case she happened to catch a glimpse of Baldy before she left for her usual week-end in Philadelphia, or wherever she went—would think of his friend, with his crazy shock of curls, his flowing Windsor tie, his funny, short, stocky figure.

"I'll have to put him up at the Swan, so she probably *will* see him. She'll think, I suppose, that I keep queer, disreputable company!" He grinned. "She'll never for an instant suspect such a looking thing of being the famous illustrator she admires so indiscriminately!"

CHAPTER XIX.

"Of course, they think it terribly unsocial of me to insist upon having a table all to myself," Beatrice remarked, when, in response to her invitation, Oliver joined her that day at her own little private table in one corner of the hotel dining room. "They've 'been hotelin'" here for twelve years, and no one ever before asked them for a private table."

At one of the other two long, narrow tables in the room were seated the hotel keeper, his "hired man," and a number of drummers; at the other, about a dozen laboring men from the shoe factory. The proprietor's wife and two daughters waited upon all three tables.

"It isn't that I'm 'proud,'" Beatrice laughed. "I really enjoy their conversation—scarce though it be! But what

I can't stand is the way they eat. So I sit with my back to them."

"It's a wonder they *give* you a separate table."

"They wouldn't if I didn't pay a high extra price for it."

"And this linen and your flowers—the Swan doesn't supply them surely?" Oliver inquired, indicating a Mexican lace doily in the center of her table, on which stood a bowl of hothouse violets.

"No, the lace is mine, and a Lancaster florist sends me the violets by parcel post," she answered, a slight embarrassment in her face. He could not help speculating as to just what was the source of this embarrassment. Miss Jenkins was not easily disconcerted.

"Tell me"—she hastened to change the subject—"did Uncle Jo go? And where?"

He told his story; and as a novelist, he found Beatrice, with her bright, alert attention, quick sympathy, and intelligent appreciation, a most satisfactory and responsive listener.

"So there is no longer," he concluded, "any impediment in the way of your visiting Mattie as often as you like."

"I think, then, I shall not go away this week-end, but stay here and cultivate my acquaintance with Miss Miller."

Oliver thoughtfully stirred his coffee, which at the Swan was of course served with the dinner, and in thick, white cups without handles. But Miss Jenkins drank from a dainty cup of Dresden china.

"Yes," Beatrice repeated conclusively, "I'll stay here this week."

To have her here over Baldy's visit would certainly complicate things! Baldy was so impetuous—he would be so apt to give their game away to her—a girl as keen as she was! Of course, there was no danger with the hotel people, who had never heard of either of them. Well, he would warn Baldy to

be cautious, in Heaven's name! For, of course, he, Oliver, could not continue to teach here once he was known; and he did not feel at all ready yet to give it all up.

He wondered whether he would not better prepare the way a bit before Baldy arrived.

"By the way," he ventured tentatively, "I expect a friend to come out here on Friday evening. He'll put up here at the Swan. I'd like an opportunity of presenting him to you—if you'll permit me that pleasure and honor?"

Beatrice bowed graciously. "The pleasure will be mine," she answered condescendingly. She did so admire her own benevolent freedom from snobishness!

Oliver stared.

"Your friend comes from Lancaster?" she inquired kindly.

"Ye—yes—from Lancaster."

"That will be nice for you," she said perfunctorily, helping herself from a jar of orange marmalade and passing it over to him. "Have some."

"Thank you. The Swan doesn't supply this, either, I suppose?" he asked, as he took a generous spoonful.

"No—oh, no. Friday night, you know, I hope to give my suffrage talk. Will you bring your friend?"

Baldy taken to hear an Adamstown teacher on suffrage! Oliver repressed a guffaw.

"I shall be delighted to bring him," he replied solemnly. "It seems to me," he added, as he set down the marmalade, "that you are a very luxurious young person, aren't you?"

"That's just what I'm not. Decencies, ordinary comforts, are essential, of course. Luxuries are debasing."

"Well, you see, in my humble walk of life, hothouse violets, imported jams, Mexican lace, sable coats, are looked upon as a little more than mere decencies. It all depends, as you and

I have observed before, upon one's point of view."

"But your own point of view—it strikes me that you are a little fond of luxuries yourself."

"The way I'm assaulting your imported jam?"

"It isn't imported. I get it from the Philadelphia Woman's Exchange."

"Woman's Exchange?" What's that? Do they exchange women? How nice! But what do they do with the children?"

She closed her eyes for an instant, to express her disdain of him.

"Trot out your proofs," he insisted, "of my 'luxurious tastes.' I think, myself, I'm a Spartan, to live in Adamstown and remain happy without any such accessories as Parma violets, lace center pieces, marmalades, Dresden china, and sable coats."

She pointed an accusing finger at him. "I caught a glimpse of your room at Mrs. Miller's yesterday."

"My room?"

"If you're not luxurious, you've at least a rather cultivated taste."

He bit his lip to check a laugh. He had "a rather cultivated taste"!

"You and my landlady wouldn't agree on that point—my 'cultivated taste.' She's always offering to replace my 'faded mats' for some of her choice rugs upon which are woven the faces of our dead presidents in hues of the Christian hell! Think of any one—even a Mrs. Miller—actually paying out money for those creations! I wonder where in the name of God she finds them?"

"In the Lancaster shops. I've seen them. By the way, does your friend that's coming to see you from Lancaster have one of those fearful Dutch names that one sees on the street signs there? If so, I need to be coached before I meet him."

"I'm sorry to say he has. Mr. Pitzer Yutzy. Yes"—Oliver nodded gravely—"Yutzy."

"Heavens! Isn't that awful?"

"He's used to it."

"Yutzy." She practiced upon it, as, laying down her napkin, she rose.

Oliver, rising to draw back her chair, and to hold her coat, was the cynosure of every eye in the room, these novel gallantries of the high-school principal's moving the spectators to various states of mind, ranging from derision and contempt to admiration, awe, and envy.

"Do you ever wonder," he deliberately asked her as they strolled together toward the high school, his hands clasped behind him as he walked, his head bent in thought, "how, in a school position like yours, a girl would manage who was dependent upon her salary?"

Beatrice, coloring vividly, looked up at him questioningly. "The grade teachers live on less, Mr. Oliver."

"But they board at home. All of them are natives of the neighborhood."

"Yes," she said indifferently.

"I can't see why," he persisted, "a vivacious, pretty girl should bury herself in a place like this unless she just had to earn her living here."

"She probably wouldn't," answered Beatrice, in a tone evidently meant to check his going any farther.

"There's one thing about you, Miss Jenkins," he said meditatively.

"What thing?"

"Your love of little luxuries—quite harmless, but a bit frivolous and—"

"I frivolous? I assure you, Mr. Oliver, that's the last thing I am!"

"Oh, but you do yourself injustice! Entirely devoid of frivolity? I've not found you so limited as that!"

She turned upon him challengingly. "Are you trying to pick a fight with me?"

"I'm trying to understand you—to get at you. I was going to say, your one redeeming frivolity—your passion

for little luxuries—seems to me inconsistent with your great earnestness in your work. You give yourself so tremendously in your teaching! You work as an artist works—from sheer love of it. Now, one doesn't work that way just for a salary. Money can't pay for vital service like yours. It's priceless. You could draw your salary, you know, without any giving of *yourself* at all. And"—he shrugged—"even perhaps earn it—it's only fifty dollars a month. What I'm trying to get at is this—your extraordinary earnestness in your work has kept me rather in awe of you—I'm very light-minded myself, you will have noticed——"

"Yes, I have noticed."

"If it's pure love of pedagogy that makes you teach, Miss Jenkins, there are better jobs than the one you have."

"Why don't you get a better one? That's what I've often wondered about you, Mr. Oliver."

"This is the best teaching position I ever had. And a member of the board told me yesterday that since I had licked Sam Dietz, he means to ask the board to give me a raise next year!"

"I congratulate you!" she returned, with a lift of her brows. "And now please tell me"—she pointedly changed the subject—"what you think of the possibility of really interesting Adams-town women in suffrage?"

"If you want my frank opinion—you might as well address your arguments to African savages; you'd meet with as much response. These people are too wholly outside the swift current of modern ideas. You can't rouse them to any really vivid interest in anything; they are too phlegmatic."

She, however, would not be discouraged. And before they parted at his desk, she made him repeat his promise to bring Mr. Pitzer Yutzy to her Friday night talk.



The Noble Force of Example

By Wallace Irwin

ILLUSTRATED BY GORDON GRANT

WHEN I was young and full o' vim
Up comes me uncle, Capting Jim,
And says to me with pious will,
"Don't never smoke tobaccy, Bill.
For if ye shun that wicked weed,
Ye'll grow up good like me, indeed."

(I took a look at Uncle Jim—
I never cared a lot fer him—
Then quickly ran to Simon Tripe
And borrowed Simon's corncob pipe.)

Another time me uncle come
And says, "Oh, scorn the Demon Rum!
That temptin' cup that wrecks and rips
Has never touched me cherry lips.
So, if ye'd grow to my estate,
Be always mild and tem-pe-rate."

(I took a look at Uncle J.,
His saucer eyes, his hair of hay,
Then walked to Casey's pothouse near
And took me maiden glass o' beer.)

"And cards," says Uncle James to me,
"Are season tickets to the D.
I've saved me money, to be frank,
And dropped it in a savin's bank.
Result of this, see where I stand
And the position I command!"

(I took one look at Uncle James,
Then sauntered forth in search for games
And lost three dollars in a night
Playin' the game of black and white.)

Full fifty years to life I've clung.
I ain't no model for the young.
I've reveled in assorted sin,
I drink, I smoke, I never win,
And all the cash that I've laid by
Would go into a fish worm's eye.

(But when I think I've been a "limb,"
Me conscience I can soothe and trim
By lookin' at me Uncle Jim—
And thank the Lord I ain't like him!)

I AINT NO MODEL FOR THE YOUNG



The Picture of a Poetess

By Marion Short

Author of "The Famous Cochran Children," "Katie Doolan's Wedding," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY H. F. NONNAMAKER

LYDIA paused on the sidewalk below Anne's window as interestedly as if listening to the music of some rare old instrument. Yet what she heard was only a commonplace typewriter puncturing the air with its intermittent clicking. When there was a silence long enough to warrant interruption, she pursed her lips and emitted a short singular whistle. Straightway a head appeared over the evergreen boxes of a second-floor window.

"Come on up, Lydia. I'm turning out a poem that simply sizzles with sentiment."

The brown hair of the speaker was literally disheveled. She had a round, sensible face which looked all of her two-and-thirty sensible years. There was a smudgy finger mark on her cheek—impress of a deeply meditative moment—a frown upon her brow, and her hazel eyes had the sleepy look of one half intoxicated from drafts of inspiration.

"Fine! What luck that I'm just in time to be audience!"

Lydia Bell, a slim, fluttery sort of girl breezed lightly around the corner and wafted rather than walked into the corridor of Quashlake's select and only hostelry. When she reached the studio, she found the poetess bent over her typewriter in the strained attitude of a spectator at a horse race as the finish approaches. Fearful of distracting her attention, the visitor tiptoed to a seat. Finally, out of six rhythmical lines, each

a contestant for the final climax of the poem, the fourth forged ahead. Anne slid the carriage back with a slam, and the typewriter bell clanged as if to announce that the race had been won by the favorite. Triumphantly she released the sheet of eight by ten and a half, and held it aloft for inspection.

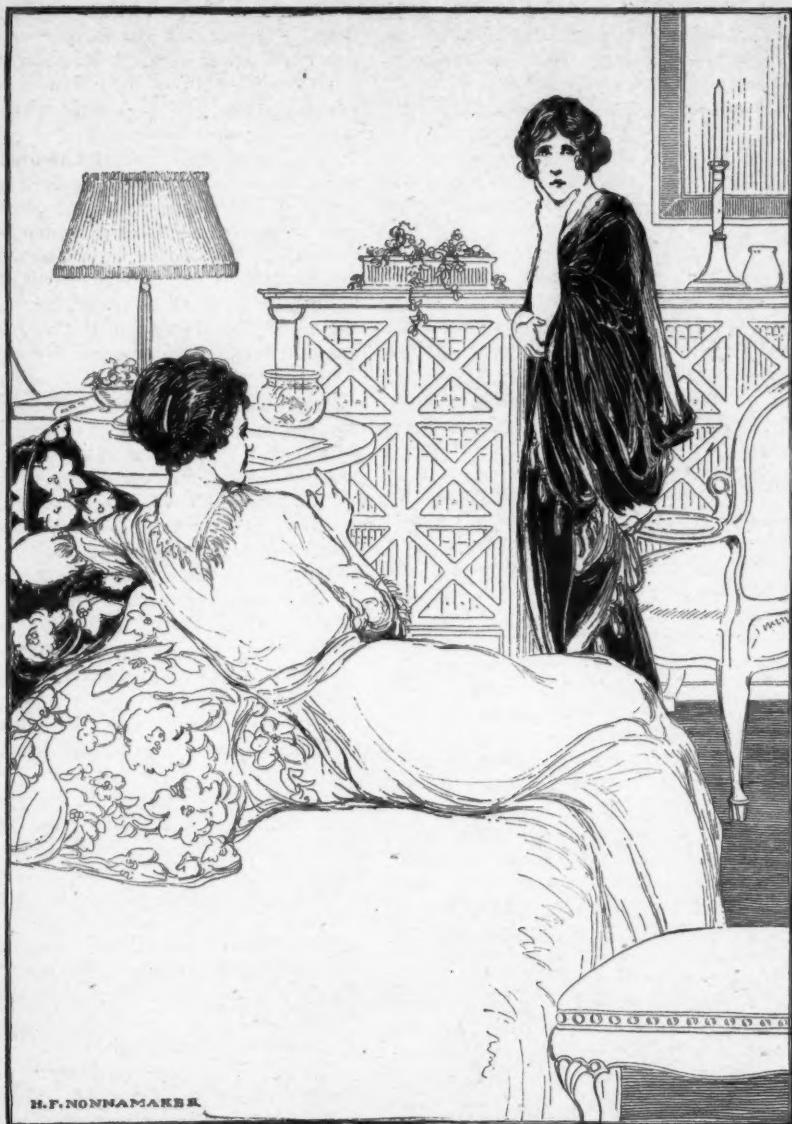
"There, the poem is finished! Idea came to me at luncheon. I deserted an omelet and rushed upstairs to begin it. Worked it out entire in a couple of hours. How's that for speed?"

"Marvelous! I always said you were a wonder, Nan!"

Seventeen-year-old Lydia never addressed Anne Kingsley as Aunt Anne. She valued too much the delightful chumminess that had somehow established itself between her admired relative and her admiring self since she had risen to the dignity of long skirts and a seminary course. She longed to sing the praises of her author aunt not only to her fellow students in the big white building on the hill, but to the inhabitants of Quashlake in general, but the poetess sternly decreed that until such time as she herself chose to divulge them, her literary achievements should be kept secret.

"'Love at Twilight,'" intoned the writer of romantic verse, dwelling musically on the vowel sounds. "How does that strike you as a title?"

"Wonderful!" breathed Lydia, enraptured. "It's so dreamy and fascinating. Do read it to me, dear!"



H. F. NONNAMAKER.

"There, now, which would you take me to be—Lydia Bell, of Quashlake Sem, or
Orchid Kingsley, poetess?"

She leaned forward as eagerly as if about to be presented with a box of her favorite chocolates. Then Anne, holding her inspired handiwork at arm's length, sang of a June twilight, and the cry of the soul for its mate, and the curved moon shining like a silver bow of promise, "while all the garden blossoms stir with the sweet prescience of thy coming!"

As she concluded, her niece sighed ecstatically and clutched at the lace ruffles in the region of her heart.

"Oh, that simply thrilled me! It's the best one you've written yet! I know it is."

"Think so?" Smilingly Anne smoothed back a lot of straggly hair, and reached for a pencil to insert a missing comma.

True, there ran through her consciousness a reminiscent vibration hinting that Lydia always claimed to be thrilled, and always pronounced her latest effort her best, but she ignored the disturbing recollection. Lydia's young enthusiasm was very gratifying indeed, especially as it persisted even when, after many fruitless journeys, an unappreciated heart throb at last found pauper's burial in the wastebasket.

In justice to Anne, however, it must be said that most of her poetic efforts were eagerly appropriated by the monthly magazine known as the *High Tide*. When unsuccessful with other publications, Anne always came back to the *High Tide* gratefully, knowing that the waves of poesy must be very much on the ebb indeed if they failed of acceptance there.

"Who would ever imagine," commented Lydia wonderingly, "that you had it in you to compose all that passionate love poetry, Nan? You look so very sensible."

Anne winced. She knew she was sensible looking and hated it. Lydia saw the quiver in her cheeks and quickly tried to make amends.

"You know I didn't mean to criticize, dear. I only meant that in your verses there's so much reckless abandon that while you're reading them I'm always astonished that you don't elope with the postman or some one."

"But the postman is so shockingly unattractive," Anne replied, with a grimace. "Besides, he's married already and has three little postmen growing up at home." She hastened to introduce a new subject. "By the way, Lydia, I'm awfully bothered about something," and she began searching among the disordered heaps of manuscript on her desk.

"Bills?"

"No, thank Heaven! With the assistance of my choir position and my dabblings in verse, I manage to keep pretty even on finances. Ah, here it is!" And she picked up a square blue envelope which Lydia recognized as the familiar editorial one of the *High Tide*. "These people have taken it into their heads to want my picture for a special poetry number they're going to issue. Of course, it's a big compliment——"

"No more than you deserve!" interpolated Lydia proudly.

"But," continued Anne, "I shall refuse point-blank to send it, just the same."

"Oh, but Nan!" protested the seminary junior. "You can't treat Mr. Richardson like that! Why, he buys nearly everything you write!"

"I'm sorry to disappoint Mr. Richardson, of course," acknowledged the poetess, "but it seems to me I ought to think first of the readers of my verse. It's my duty to keep from disillusioning them if I can."

"Disillusioning them—how?"

"By permitting them to discover that Anne Kingsley, professionally known as 'Orchid Kingsley,' is a stout and settled-looking female of thirty-two. The author of 'The Wraith of Amaryllis,' and 'Passion's Dawn,' and 'Love's Eter-

nity' ought to be a slim, temperamental dryad in her teens."

"Well, you don't look exactly dryadish, Nan," admitted Lydia unwillingly, "but—"

"You may laugh," interrupted Anne, "but I felt very dryadish indeed while I was writing those verses. It seemed to me that I was young and beautiful and generally irresistible. It helped me compose the poetry, and, besides that, I enjoyed it. I bluffed myself thoroughly. I think I bluffed my readers pretty well, too, judging by some of the letters the magazine sent on to me. I shall never permit my real identity to be made known, Lydia. I couldn't bear it. My last photograph looks like that of a prosaic spinster who might have compiled a cookbook."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed her listener impatiently. "You don't resemble a cookbook in the least. You only imagine it."

Anne shrugged her shoulders hopelessly.

"I can't expect you to understand how I feel about it, Lydia. You're a poem in the flesh, and simply couldn't. Oh, if it were only possible to borrow your personality and forward it to Mr. Richardson as my own, I'd do it with the utmost joy, but as it is—" Another hopeless shrug.

Lydia's long, lithe figure straightened itself. A look of impish mischief danced into her eyes. She clutched the poetess by either plump shoulder.

"Nan," she cried, "then do it with the utmost joy, and let me help you."

Startled, Anne dropped "Love at Twilight" from one hand and her nibbled pencil from the other.

"Have you gone crazy, Lydia? Do what?"

"Exchange personalities with me for this one occasion. Now listen to me for a minute! You want the admirers of your poetry to think you are girly-girly and all that sort of thing, don't you?

And you're a wonder when it comes to handling a camera, aren't you? I can dress my hair so differently that my best friends wouldn't recognize me in a photograph. Mr. Richardson has never seen you and won't know the difference, so why not send a fancy picture of me and let that appear as the author of the *Orchid Kingsley* poems? Eh?"

"Lydia, how preposterous!"

"But it isn't, Anne. It's the brightest kind of a scheme, if I did think it up myself."

But the poetess shook her head and backed away from the temptress.

"Some one here in Quashlake would be certain to recognize you, disguise or no disguise—"

"But I say they wouldn't!" contradicted Lydia.

"Besides, Mr. Richardson might find it out—and then the fat would be in the fire sure enough!"

"Oh, Nan, life is so unendingly stupid here in Quashlake. Come on! Let's dare one little harmless adventure just for the fun of the thing if nothing else!"

But Anne turned and trudged determinedly toward her typewriter.

"Time for you to be trotting on back to the sem, Lydia. We're talking nonsense, and I must get busy with my rhymes and rhythms."

"Now you just let those rhymes and rhythms wait a while." As Lydia spoke, she snatched up a striped couch cover and wrapped it round and round her graceful young body. Then quickly she pulled her raven tresses down over her ears, and struck a picturesque pose.

"There, now, which would you take me to be—Lydia Bell, of Quashlake Sem, or Orchid Kingsley, poetess?"

"You little witch!" breathed Anne, entranced. "You're an Alfred Noyesian dream! I'd give half my life and all my poetry for a profile like that! My nose feels puggier than ever as I look at you. Oh, Lydia!" And her sigh was profoundly envious.

Lydia dimpled with pleasure.

"You think, then, that I'd be the sort of Orchid to appeal to Mr. Richardson?"

"My dear, your nose alone is enough to enslave him for a lifetime, and boom my poetry to the bursting point!"

"Well, then, will you be game and borrow me, or won't you?"

"Well," said Anne, temporizing, "at least I'll get out my camera and take your picture in that outfit. I'd like to have it for my room here, in any case. Then—we'll see."

Two months later, when the special poetry number of the *High Tide* appeared, quite a discussion arose among Lydia's classmates—several of whom admired the Orchid Kingsley poems with secret and fearful intensity—as to whether the picture of the poetess, with the face so tantalizingly in shadow, did or did not resemble the in-no-way-remarkable Lydia Bell. The majority of the students, among whom was Lydia herself, inclined to the belief that the idea was entirely absurd, and the original discoverer of the supposed resemblance was pooh-poohed quite out of countenance.

Lydia was much disappointed when she related the circumstances of their escape from threatened detection to the other party concerned.

"You've such a sense of humor usually, Nan," she complained, "but you don't seem a bit amused over the outcome of our little joke."

Anne emerged from her gloomy abstraction and at the same time explained it.

"Because there's been another outcome that isn't amusing in the least."

Lydia clutched apprehensively at the arms of her chair.

"You don't mean that some one has been odious enough to really find us out?"

"No, but he will do so if I don't head



It was only a few tactful words that she inserted before dropping her aunt's message in the postbox.

him off from coming here next Saturday, as he intends."

"How do you know he intends, and who is he, anyhow?"

"He's a writer for the *High Tide*, like myself, only he does novels instead of poems. He's on here from his home in the West, and wants to make my personal acquaintance. He admired some verses I wrote a year ago, and we've been corresponding ever since."

"Why, Anne!" exclaimed Lydia, always interested in anything that remotely smacked of sentiment. "I consider it frightfully and joyously romantic, his wishing to meet you!"

"But he didn't wish it," Anne informed her, "until he saw that picture in the *High Tide*. He says so himself. Now that he has seen it, of course, I don't dare let him come and discover the deception. He'd lose all respect for me."

"I don't see why he should do that," objected Lydia stoutly. "In my opinion, it's just as allowable to use a *face de plume* as it is a *nom de plume*."

But Anne shook her head.

"Besides being ashamed of having sailed under false colors, Lydia, I would simply wilt before the disappointment in his eyes when he saw the difference between a plain fact——"

"But, Nan," interrupted Lydia, with a desire to be comforting, "you aren't such a *very* plain fact. Anyhow, you're so original and entertaining, he won't care how you look five minutes after he begins to talk with you."

"Lydia," observed Anne, with settled pessimism, "whether a woman is entertaining or not may count occasionally with a man, but whether she is beautiful or not counts always. Besides, he might feel in honor bound to report the trick we've played to Mr. Richardson—in which case it would be good-by to the *High Tide*, so far as the Orchid Kingsley's poems are concerned."

"Whew!" breathed Lydia, subdued. "That is a teaser, isn't it? Of course, it would be really dreadful if Mr. Rich-

ardson ever discovered what we'd done." But after a moment of depression, she rallied. "Oh, Nan, if your novelist is a real man, he won't blame you or blab about it at all. You can tell him it was all intended for a lark."

"I shall tell him nothing," declared Anne firmly, "for I've not the slightest intention of allowing him to come."

"What's his name?" inquired Lydia, resigning herself reluctantly to Anne's decision.

"Jules Victor Montrose!"

Lydia emitted an ecstatic shriek.

"Nan, you don't mean it! Why, we sem girls are just crazy over his novels! He's bound to be fascinating, or he could never invent such adorable heroes. And he might fall in love with you! Why not give yourself the chance at a real romance instead of that make-believe you're always writing about? Oh, Nan, you've just got to let him meet you!"

"No, Lydia," replied Anne firmly, "it's utterly impossible. Why, you ought to realize for yourself that there's no way to save our faces, and especially mine, but to keep him at a safe distance!"

"But what excuse can you give for refusing to let him come?"

"The weaker the excuse, the harder the snub, and a snub to the wise is sufficient. I've already written the letter. Please stamp it, dear, and drop it in the box on your way out." She passed her hand wearily over a ruffled forehead. "I've a hazy inspiration for a poem entitled 'When Love Is Done,' and I think I'd better get at it."

"If you'd only be sensible, you might write one on 'When Love Begins,' instead," moaned Lydia, "and it would be a lot more cheerful, too!"

When she reached the hotel office, the bearer of the letter perceived that Anne had forgotten to seal it. It was only a few tactful words that the schoolgirl inserted before dropping her aunt's mes-

sage in the postbox, but it changed the intended snub into a gentle statement that Mr. Jules Victor Montrose would receive a cordial welcome on his arrival in Quashlake the following Saturday afternoon.

If dear, sensitive, wonderful Anne foolishly insisted on heading off anything so desirable as a possible love affair, Lydia reflected, striving to justify her meddlesome act, then it really became one's duty to interfere.

On the Thursday before the Saturday set for the arrival of Jules Victor Montrose, Lydia left the seminary at the close of the afternoon session, and leisurely strolled along the tree-bordered road that led to the Quashlake Hotel. It was a sunny day, and she enjoyed it in spite of a slight feeling of uneasiness as she thought of the amended message she had dispatched to the novelist. Suppose her beloved Anne should take serious offense when he unexpectedly presented himself, or suppose that Jules Victor Montrose, on seeing the real Anne, should imagine that some practical joke had been played on him, turn on his heel, and— But Saturday was two days distant. Time enough to begin to worry on Friday night.

Quite unsuspectingly, en route for Anne's studio, she entered the little park that surrounded Quashlake station. With mild interest she observed a tall, loose-jointed man swing from the rear platform of a local train from New York. A soft hat was pulled well down over his nose, and he peered from under it with an uncertain and speculative air. He was a stranger to Quashlake, Lydia decided, and she wondered if he could be the uncle one of the seminary girls was expecting.

Just then the man's green-gray eyes discovered the young woman, and his speculative look changed to one of certainty. Lydia did not recall ever having seen him before, but she knew the purple magazine he was carrying was the

identical one containing the spurious likeness of Anne. Somehow the fact seemed unpleasantly significant. Her feeling of apprehension was not lessened when the newcomer stopped abruptly in front of her and raised his hat.

"Miss Kingsley, I believe?" and Lydia caught a glimpse of dark hair slightly tinged with gray curling over a broad white forehead. In a flash his identity came to her. He mistook her for Anne Kingsley—he was Jules Victor Montrose, of course!

"N-no—" she stammered, the blood rising hotly to her cheeks.

"I beg your pardon, but surely I can't be mistaken."

He held up the purple magazine, thrust an inquiring thumb between its pages, and opened at once to the print of the girl on the couch cover.

"This is your picture, isn't it?"

Lydia, aghast, stared at him without attempting a reply. To throw Anne into the confusion of meeting the novelist without preparation, and allowing her to make the best of it, had seemed a thing quite humorous in prospect, but to be placed in the same position herself was an entirely different matter. Her interference in her aunt's affairs seemed silly, unwarranted, and impossible of explanation as she faced the dignified stranger.

"It is your picture, isn't it?" repeated the man, a trifle more insistently.

"Y-yes," Lydia acknowledged faintly, realizing that both her wits and her self-possession were threatening to desert her. "Yes, it's me—mine, I mean, of course."

"Then you are Miss Orchid Kingsley, as I thought?"

The color receded from her cheeks, giving her the appearance of the dismayed ghost of her piquant self.

"I—I am." It seemed easier to acquiesce than to explain, but she gulped as she voiced the falsehood, and gave

a wild glance over her shoulder, contemplating flight. "You see," she murmured, "you weren't expected until Saturday, and it—it's confusing to—for you to—to—arrive on Thursday instead."

"So confusing that it caused you to forget your name?"

Lydia nodded, then blushed furiously, as she realized both the absurdity of his question and of her acknowledgment. Though she avoided his glance, it seemed to her that the visitor's keen eyes were penetrating her very brain. Again she felt an almost overpowering impulse to take to her heels.

"And you were expecting me on Saturday, you say?"

"Why, that was the day you mentioned for your arrival, wasn't it?" And Lydia strove hard to assume an offhand manner.

"My dear young lady," stated the man surprisingly, "I was entirely unaware that I had mentioned any day or was expected to arrive at all."

"Why—why, but you are Mr. Jules Victor Montrose, aren't you?" queried the schoolgirl, dumfounded.

He gave a curious little laugh.

"I know the gentleman, but I am not he."

"Then why," she blazed, relieved but indignant, "if you aren't Mr. Montrose, did you demand to know if I wasn't Orchid Kingsley?"

"Because," came the quiet answer, "I am the man who published Orchid Kingsley's picture in this magazine."

The little park seemed to spin like a green merry-go-round for a moment, and Lydia put out her hand as if to hold the stranger stationary before her.

"You're—the editor—of—the *High Tide*?"

Again he doffed his hat.

"Otherwise known as C. H. Richardson."

Lydia glanced surreptitiously toward the evergreen window across the square,

where Anne's curtains blew out and waved in the wind like two white signals of distress. She felt like waving distressfully back to them. Mr. Richardson's presence constituted a greater dilemma than the supposed one she had been facing. What shaped itself clearly in her mind was that she must keep up the pose she had assumed. It was the only way to protect Anne, whom she herself had inveigled into deceiving the editor, from personally encountering that formidable individual.

"I'm sorry if my appearance seems ill-timed," remarked Mr. Richardson, breaking an awkward silence.

"So am I," cried Lydia piteously, thinking of her beloved Anne. "You shouldn't have come without warning her—me, I mean. It—it wasn't right. Oh, what put the notion into your head?"

She stopped abruptly, appalled at her own discourteous words.

"Isn't it natural," he inquired pleasantly, "that I should wish to meet one who has graced our pages so many times?"

"I suppose so," she said, struggling for self-mastery, "and, of course, I am glad to meet you, too."

"Your home—is it far from here?"

"No, not far," she said vaguely, trying to smile, "but I really can't invite you up to the studio to-day. It isn't convenient."

"Why, I'm sorry for that. You see, I had a special reason for wishing to talk to you—and I can't keep you standing here."

"Oh, I don't mind standing. In school we always—" She checked herself hastily. "I mean—I'm not the least bit tired."

He turned and began to look about him.

"There's a bench under that scrubby tree that seems to be vacant," he suggested. "We might have half an hour's chat there."

"Oh, but I really can't stay for a chat," cried Lydia. "I'm very busy and I have to go in just a second."

"We've scarcely begun our conversation, Miss Kingsley. You mustn't think of running away and leaving me so soon."

"But what good does it do for me to stay, when I realize all the time that I should be going?"

He motioned her courteously to a seat on the bench beside him, and she dropped down upon it for a moment, though against her will.

"You can aid me in a bit of detective work for one thing, if you'll be so kind."

"Detective work?" Somehow his words increased her feeling of uneasiness. "What kind of detective work do you mean?"

"Very interesting—a case of—" he began, then smilingly interrupted himself. "Oh, by the way, I must compliment you, Miss Kingsley, on the central idea of that series of poems you are planning for *Willard's Magazine!*"

Lydia did not reply. She looked up the railroad tracks, wishing ardently that a freight might thunder by to give her an excuse for silence and time to think what to do. She knew nothing whatever about the series he mentioned.



The man beside her showed no surprise at her startling revelation.

If he started to discuss the subject, disastrous consequences were inevitable!

"Mr. Richardson," she burst out impetuously, "I have a very bad headache, and don't feel like talking things over to-day. Won't you please excuse me?" And she arose.

But the tall man on the bench only crossed his legs and settled down with the air of one having infinite leisure and the disposition to enjoy it. He motioned her back to the seat beside him,

and helplessly she took it. There was a solid something in the manner of the editor that seemed to anchor her to his will.

"Oh, we won't linger over details very long," he said lightly. "If you'll just answer one or two brief questions—"

"But I don't think people with a headache ought to be expected to answer questions," protested poor Lydia.

"I don't wish to appear inconsiderate," he said politely, "but that detective work I mentioned happens to be quite important."

"What do you want to know, then?" quavered Anne's niece. "I don't see how I can help you. I was never even acquainted with a detective in my whole life."

He eyed her disturbed countenance with preternatural solemnity.

"Why did you select a biblical character, Miss Kingsley, as the central figure of that series?"

Lydia moved her slender hands as if to break through the meshes of a smothering web.

"I don't see how a biblical character can have anything to do with detective work," she answered evasively.

"Ah, but perhaps investigation may clear the matter up," he answered portentously. "What led you to select Judith as your heroine?"

"Er—did I?"

"Don't you remember that you did?"

"Why, of course," murmured Lydia confusedly; "whenever my head stops aching long enough for me to remember anything."

"Now, aren't you mistaken?" questioned the editor, with sudden sternness. "When you come to think it over, wasn't it Naomi instead of Judith?"

The girl, glancing at him askance, detected an amused twinkle in his eye. She was on her feet in an instant.

"Oh, I understand now!" she cried accusingly. "You are just trying to

tangle me up and confuse me, and I don't believe you are Mr. Richardson, after all!"

"Why, my dear Miss Kingsley!" His manner was one of shocked reproach. "What if I were to say that I didn't believe you were Orchid Kingsley, after all?"

"I'd own that you told the truth!" cried the pretty pretender, bursting into tears. "I just can't go on being some one else any longer, no matter if it means disgrace to some one else and me, too. I'm not Orchid Kingsley, and I never was."

The man beside her showed no surprise at her startling revelation.

"Thank you very much," he said pleasantly. "Then the first part of my detective work is accomplished. And now may I ask you to help me unravel a second tangle by telling me where I may locate the real Miss Kingsley?"

Lydia, more courageous now, threw back her head and determinedly clenched her fists.

"No, no, never!" she cried. "After all, everything was my fault from the start, and I won't have her blamed for it. I won't! I won't!"

And just then Anne, out for her daily walk, stopped unheralded on the pebbly walk in front of them.

"Why, Lydia, child! What are you shrieking about like this? What's gone wrong?"

"Oh, you'll know what's gone wrong in a minute," came the hysterical answer, "and you'll wish you didn't."

Anne sent a level glance at the stranger who, standing a few feet distant, met her eyes with characteristic calm.

"'Bub' Richardson!" she ejaculated, in tones of hushed delight. "Bub! After all these years!"

And to her niece's profound amazement she extended two welcoming hands to the formidable editor, and the formidable editor took them and clung to them, as if disposed never to let go.

"Yes, Anne, it's Bub. I came out here on purpose to find you. It certainly does seem good to meet my kid sweetheart once more."

"But how can your name be 'Bub'?" broke in Lydia, with shrill nervousness. "You're the editor of the *High Tide Magazine*—you told me so!"

"What?" cried Anne, amazed, but disturbed. "You can't be the C. H. Richardson who buys my poetry?"

"The same, but not the man who allowed this young woman's likeness to be printed as yours. That happened while I was away on a trip to Italy. Young Montrose was temporarily head of the verse department during my absence, and he has gone permanently mad about the picture, I fear. He says he intends to meet the original next Saturday or die in the attempt! But I—why, I've suspected and hoped all along that the famous Orchid Kingsley was none other than the modest little Anne I used to know. I had to prove your

identity after that poetry number came out—so here I am. Anne! Anne! What made you substitute another face for your own? I wanted the one I remembered."

"Scold all you like," laughed Anne, and proceeded to introduce Lydia, and make confession of how the whole thing had occurred.

Lydia, perceiving that her presence was no longer necessary or even observed, melted quietly away. So the wonderful Mr. Jules Victor Montrose admired her picture, did he?—and was resolved to come to Quashlake on Saturday or die in the attempt. Oh, Heaven forbid he should die! She looked back. Anne and her editor had started across the lawn toward the quaint little Quashlake Hotel. From Anne's evergreen window two curtains fluttered and waved in the riotous spring breeze. But they no longer looked like signals of distress to Lydia. No, they seemed more like twin wedding veils!



An Unusual Bird

MARY, aged four, had been forbidden to touch the ink, owing to her having had several accidents with it, to the detriment of her clothes and the rugs. One day her mother came into the room where she was, and saw a telltale puddle on the desk. Mary, however, denied all knowledge of it. The mother, anxious to help the little girl confess her guilt, finally said:

"But, Mary, dear, while I was on the veranda, a little bird came and whispered to me that you had upset the ink. That is how I know you did it."

Mary considered a moment.

"That must have been the very bird I saw come in and do it himself," she said.

For Love of Lolita

By Izola Forrester

Author of "Fugitives from Eden," "Cheyenne Charlie's Hostage," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY G. C. PUGSLEY

THE way "Checkers" told it after the boys brought him down to Big Rabbit, he'd been riding peacefully and calm around his herd about two a. m. when he run close up on a couple of Ute braves camping in his lines.

"And when I spoke to them as if they'd 'most been white, they up and plugged at me with magazine rifles. One's dead back yonder, and the other got away with my horse."

Lolita Evarts listened, all eyes and ears, behind the counter in her father's outfitting store. The boys always gathered there when there was anything doing, even with the lure of the Golden Eagle directly over the way. Perhaps Lolita's dark eyes and swift-flashing smile of friendliness were more magnetic than "Rattlesnake Bill's," proprietor of the Eagle.

Checkers caught her eyes now, and something seemed to sparkle between them in the long, straight look. He knew she was sorry for him. Perhaps he believed there was something stronger behind the mere sympathy. Certainly the way the warm color flowed up prettily to Lolita's cheeks might have sent any fellow's wits woolgathering.

"We'll get the Indian by noon tomorrow," said Placido Aguano, lounging at the end of the counter and watching Lolita through his cigarette smoke. "You going to be strong enough to come along, Check?"

"He not strong at all," Lolita put in

anxiously. "My father take ver' good care of him, Señor Sheriff; ver' fine care, I promise."

"I don't doubt it, Miss Lolita," Placido said solemnly. "And he's in luck, too, to be invited to stay put."

"I can ride," protested Checkers huskily. "It takes more'n that to put me out of the game."

"You ver' weak, señor," smiled Lolita, half shyly. "And you ride for my father. He not here to-day, gone down to San Antoine, but I mus' do what he would do. You mus' be our guest, yes?"

"Gee, fellows!" groaned Checkers, when she had slipped out of the room. "I can't get out of it, can I?"

"Your leg's broken, and you've got a bullet in your shoulder," Placido reminded him. "We can get the Utes without you. Cheer up and make hay, boy. The sun's sure shining on you now."

So while Placido rode away after the Utes, with half a dozen of the boys, Checkers lay on his back in the Evarts' back room and, for the sake of Lolita, smothered the groans of utter, helpless disgust that rose to his lips. His next move might have been a worse one, and when old Evarts came home later, he looked the boy over soberly and sent down to El Riano after a real doctor.

The Utes decided that their tribal reputation and dignity were at stake. When Placido's little band of six swept toward them, they went straight up into



The two of them were looking into each other's eyes in that longing, welcoming way there's no mistaking.

the mountains, and Placido came back after fifty men and the Indian agent. And he was at Evarts' for about twenty minutes, after an absence of three days. Perhaps he saw then how things were going. Lolita had her patient on a cot out on the little back porch, and she had flowers around him, plenty of them, red and pink azaleas and white lilies with such an exotic fragrance it turned your head to catch it.

And that wasn't all. Lolita herself sat near by, with some sewing lying idle in her lap, all dressed up in pink, with a little black ribbon around her throat

and her gold convent medal dangling from it, and a pink flower in her dark curls. And Placido, hesitating at the door, saw that the two of them were looking into each other's eyes in that longing, welcoming way there's no mistaking.

But a woman naturally keeps one ear to windward, and Lolita turned her head instinctively, her face all delicate flushes and tender betrayal. Checkers groaned and punched his pillow up under his chin. And he looked up at Placido eagerly.

"Get him?"



Old man Everts picked up a Colt and shot through the open window for luck at the big fellow in front.

"Nope. They've gone southwest into the mountains. Fortified themselves, and got magazine rifles. We came back for men."

"I want to go along."

"Ah, no!" breathed Lolita fearfully. Then she met Placido's eyes again; very calm they were, but with something in them that silenced her. And she remembered the days before Checkers had come. Evarts' store was popular among the boys from the outlying ranches. All the campers and hunters made a point of stopping off there, too, just as much to make love to Lolita as to buy her father's goods. But with Placido, the big, ungainly young sheriff, it had been different. His mother had been an American girl from Pueblo. She had married old Miguel Aguano, who had been shot dead in a little arroyo south of the States' line, smuggling in nice, brand-new rifles for the Mexican revolutionists.

That had been in Diaz's time. Placido had been brought up in Pueblo with his mother's people, and you would never have known he was part Spanish if it hadn't been for the slow, deep look in his dark eyes and a certain underlying tone in his face that was richer than any coat of tan. He was, perhaps, the best-liked man in the county; even the In-

dians trusted him, as a rule. And Big Rabbit knew he had handed all the love and faith of his heart, all that stored-up belief in women that a man somehow keeps in him through everything, to Lolita Evarts.

Which showed defective judgment on Placido's part. For Lolita was as lovely and sweet as one of the little red roses she liked to tuck back of one ear for the boys to fight over, and tender-hearted—oh, yes. But she just wasn't the sort of a life mate a man like Placido de-



Lolita was on her own pony, bound for the telegraph office fourteen miles down the valley.

served. She was a kitten, old Evarts said.

"All women, they are but kittens, my boy," he had told Placido, when the sheriff had told him how he felt. "Some are panther kittens, and some are just cat kittens, but they are all kittens, to be petted and cared for and given unending love; but always remember they are but kittens. Then you guard against their claws and their selfishness and their strange ways. Take her by all means, señor, if she will go."

Yet Lolita had shrunk back against the clambering rose vines on the porch the night Placido had told her that he loved her, and had shivered as if a cool wind had blown up from the river.

"Ah, señor, I have respect, but no love for you," and her long lashes had fluttered down over her eyes like folded butterfly wings. "And I am seventeen, but four mont' from de convent. I not like to marry, please."

"Will you give me first chance for a year, 'Lita? No promise, little red rose of my heart, no promise at all, only give me first chance if you happen to change your mind, yes?"

And the hidden coquetry that lent the light to her eyes and the wistful, yearning little uplift to her lips, had made her grant him that much. For one year, she had said, she would give love a chance to come to her in the guise of Señor Placido Aguano.

It would have been all right, too, but for Checkers. Placido was a man any woman might be proud to give her love to, but Checkers was twenty-two. Lolita had seen him nearly every month since her home-coming from Santa Fortuna, had watched him ride leisurely up the dusty main street, and swing off his pony, and come in to talk over the cattle outfit with her father. He was all fresh, clean, laughing youth and boyishness. His eyes never had the weary look that sometimes came to Placido's. And gradually it happened that some-

how, by love's unseen alchemy, Checkers came to represent to her all the beauty of life, all the music of the birds, all the brilliancy of the flowers, all the songs she loved best, and the hush of the twilight, and the break of the dawn. Placido had never wakened such harmonies in her heart. He was just Placido, some one she had comforted by a little false promise he must outgrow before the year was up.

It was two days after the second posse started for the mountains that the Utes swept down on Big Rabbit. It was a propitious moment. All the best men had joined Placido's crowd, and Checkers could not hold a rifle against his shoulder.

All in a minute it happened—the beat of ponies' hoofs up the street, a woman's high-pitched shriek as her youngest boy went down under the galloping, half-crazed animals. At Evarts' store they wheeled and formed a half moon, and old man Evarts picked up a Colt and shot through the open window for luck at the big fellow in front. He fell dead, half underneath his pony, and the rest answered.

Checkers sat up, the perspiration starting on his face at the popping shots. He tried to wriggle his arm and wrist out of the bandages and sling, but Lolita dropped beside him on the floor, her arms flung around him, her cheek pressed close against his breast.

"You not go!" she begged, in a whisper. "I not let you go!"

"But I've got to. You don't understand." Checkers dragged her up closer to him with his free arm. "You precious lovely kid girl, you, I can't stick here and hide, with the devils taking pot shots at your dad like he was a prairie dog. Kiss me and let me go."

Just one long kiss she gave him, a kiss that left Checkers seeing stars in fancy patterns, and he left her lying face downward on his cot while he staggered out to join the old man.



He glanced up sharply as a horse and rider appeared through the sunlit pines.

Now it appears that the Utes had no particular grudge against Big Rabbit as a town, but they did want one Checkers for a pastime and holiday up in Ute land. And after they had shot old Evans through the hip and set fire to his place, they bound Checkers on the back of a piebald pony that showed the whites of its eyes when it was pleased, and rode off peacefully.

Before the last dust had settled after them, Lolita was on her own pony, bound for the telegraph office fourteen miles down the valley. It was no use trying to save the house, and her father lay over at Rattlesnake Bill's, with the doctor probing for the bullet in his hip. No one missed Lolita. Fast she rode through the sweet morning coolness,

and when she got to Riano, she sent the hottest message up to the governor that ever hit the wires from that particular little pine station. She said the Utes were on the warpath, burning, killing defenseless men, women, and children. She trimmed up the narrative just as if she had been in the habit of writing regularly for the press. You'd have thought Checkers was the most important human west of the Missouri.

Placido was squatted down before his camp fire, toasting bacon on a stick and whistling to himself. He didn't know anything except that the Utes had vanished from their rocky stronghold, leaving some ashes and bones scattered about, and had gone farther south.

He glanced up sharply as a horse and

rider appeared through the sunlit pines. Some of the men leaped to their feet, hands at their holsters at sight of the Indian, but he was only a boy, and he lifted his hand high, palm outward, in token of friendliness. He was not picturesque. Placido knew him at sight. It was Talking Owl, a boy Evarts had befriended and put to work after he had run away from the reservation. He pushed by the questioning men and handed Placido a folded piece of paper.

"She say bring him back," he said gravely, and walked unsteadily back to his pony. He had ridden from Big Rabbit since two o'clock.

It was an odd, impassioned little letter Lolita had sent, written in the careful convent script. Placido held it down near the fire and read:

SEÑOR AGUANO: I tell you the Utes have come to us here. They have burn our house, and shot my father, and they have taken away my Checkers to torture and kill. I have used your name in wiring the governor for soldiers, and I know you will not scold at me, for all my heart, señor, has been taken by those Utes to torture, and all the world is black if I see him not again.

I ask you to bring him back to me, and I ask you to forgive me when I say to wait a year, for now I know what love is, and I have much wronged you to say wait that year. I will not eat nor sleep until you bring him back to me, señor, and if he comes not, I pray the good God He takes me also. Ah, God, señor, bring him back to me soon! Obediently yours,

LOLITA EVARTS.

The men had been in the saddle since morning, yet Placido led them out that night, and the boy, Talking Owl, piloted them over the old Indian trail south after the Utes. When they came to the last arroyo in the valley between the ranges, the boy was sent back to meet the soldiers and tell them where the Indians lay hidden.

"I have already told you, señor," said old Evarts a month later, standing beside Placido, "that the women are but cats—some the panther, some the lioness, some the kitten, yet they all have

claws. My beautiful little kitten Lolita has but now stepped from the mission at Santa Fortuna on the arm of Señor Francisco Higgins, whom you call 'Frank,' and again he is called 'Checkers.' I do not aprove, but she is happy, so happy the saints themselves might envy her this day."

"He's all right," Placido put in slowly. "I don't blame her."

"But I blame you, señor, that you let this kitten scratch your heart with her claws. You do her bidding. You imperil your own life to go to the Utes. You find him ready for torture. You go alone, by night, to cut the ropes they have bound him with, and you can just now stand up from the wounds they gave you, yes? If the soldiers had not come in time, you would have been sacrificed. As it is, you will always walk a bit lame on that left side where they stuck the knife, yes?"

Placido laughed uneasily and gazed off through half-shut eyelids at the purple rim of foothills beyond the orange-red earth. In his pocket was a folded slip of paper, Lolita's only message to him. There was a knife slash through it, where a Ute, crawling through the grass, had dug into him that night.

But somewhere into the purple-and-gold shadows of those hills she was riding with her husband, the boy he had brought back alive to her. He remembered the look in her eyes as she had lifted her hands in prayer over the dusty, bedraggled, tortured body of the lad, and how she had turned to him for comfort, laying her little head against his shoulders and sobbing while he set his teeth and held her gently from him.

"Señor, you might have lost your life," Evarts declared. "And for what?"

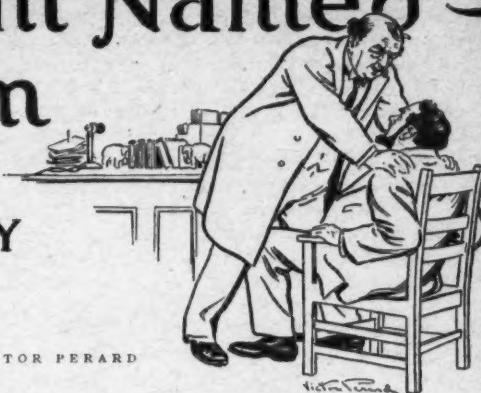
Placido smiled down at him.

"Ain't you ever found out yet there's a whole lot of things handed out to us in the deal that's worse than the ace of spades? I reckon she handed me the joker, God bless her!"

A Worm Named— Vittum

By
HOLMAN F. DAY

ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD



JUST what the governor of the State wanted of him Cap'n Aaron Sproul couldn't figure out, although he pondered rather apprehensively on the matter during his journey up to the State capital. The message had been urgent and noncommittal.

After he had tiptoed into the executive chamber on the heels of the private secretary, he felt a bit more comfortable in his mind, for the governor had tendered a hearty handshake accompanied by a bland smile of greeting.

Then his fat excellency lumbered ponderously around the end of his flat-topped desk and seated himself, suggesting to the cap'n's seaman's imagination an ocean liner in dock.

The governor's first remark did not elucidate any of the mystery of the thing. He inquired: "Has anybody killed that jackass of a Hiram Look down in your town as yet?"

"No," stated the cap'n gravely, "he's still perky and pecky."

"That's too bad," said the governor. "I had hoped that somebody would commit justifiable homicide in his case and then come to me for a pardon. Cap'n Sproul, I haven't forgotten that you rescued me from his clutches when

he was making me a part of his peep show on the excuse that he was tendering me a reception. You helped me to get away and keep my appointment with five thousand voters at the shire town. Now I am able to return that favor."

"Nothing is expected in the way of pay," asserted the cap'n. "I didn't want you to think we was all heathens in Scotaze."

"That's just the kind of spirit I like to reward, sir. I'll come straight to the point: The high sheriff of your county has disgraced his office. The manner in which he has conducted the jail has become a public scandal. He has resigned rather than be exposed and punished. I'm going to appoint you high sheriff to fill out his term."

The cap'n pulled himself to the edge of his chair, and gasped—then he began to glower.

"Well! Well!" snapped his excellency. "Is that the way to look at me when I offer you high office?"

"I suppose I might stand up and give you three cheers," returned Cap'n Sproul sullenly. "But I guess I won't, for fear they'd blister my throat."

"What's the matter with you, Cap'n Sproul?"

"Nothing—not till just now."

"Don't you appreciate a favor?"

"You can't make a sculpin good eating by calling it trout."

"Do you mean to say you will not accept?"

"Look here, Governor Lignumore, I resigned that office once. I was shanghaied into it. I didn't ever want it. I never had a moment's peace while I was in it. I left the sea and came ashore to spend my last days taking comfort. I ain't going to allow anybody to abuse me any more."

Still keeping glowering gaze on the governor, he began to fumble under his chair, searching for his hat.

"You had the office once and you made a good sheriff," insisted the chief executive.

"I had the inflammatory rheumatism once, and the nurse said I made a good patient, but I've been mighty careful ever since."

"You're the only man who can go into that office and straighten things out. It's now a blot on my administration, and will be used against me at the next election, sir. Are you going to desert me?"

"Pick out some critter that's hankering for trouble—the world is full of 'em," counseled the surly old mariner. "I've come ashore to end my days in peace."

"There isn't another man in your county who is to be trusted. They are all out for graft. You owe this duty to your section, Cap'n Sproul. You've got to clean things up. They all know you and your record. You won't have a bit of trouble."

"I see you don't know me very well," retorted the cap'n. "When I take a public office, I stir up all the kinds of trouble that's laid down in the back of the almanac—along with new ones that nobody ever heard of before. I won't take the job."

"You will," shouted the governor.

"If you don't, you're a traitor to your county and your party. You're the right man—the only man. Sit back in that chair! Now you wait a moment."

Glaring at the cap'n at intervals, he began to write. Then he pushed a button. The private secretary appeared.

"Post that appointment on the board," directed the governor. "Give out to the newspapers that Cap'n Aaron Sproul, of Scotaze, has been appointed to fill the unexpired term of Phineas Baker, sheriff of Cuxabexis County, resigned."

Then the governor lunged across the room, set his lumpy, great hands on Cap'n Sproul's shoulders, and began to talk to him as political tyrants of experience know how to talk.

A half hour later Cap'n Sproul went stamping his ireful way down to the railroad station, cursing rulers and principalities, calls of duty and demands of party. But he had consented to serve as high sheriff of Cuxabexis until some other honest man could be hunted out with the party's lantern.

His resentful rage not only lasted him to the shire town, but developed more of a wire edge as he pondered on the manner in which he had been picked up and rammed into an office that he had quitted in disgust.

From the railroad station he marched up the main street, his hands behind his back so that he might not be tempted to return the salutes tendered him by respectful citizens who hailed him as "sheriff." The news had gone ahead of him.

But he suddenly shot out one of those hands, and grabbed the collar of a passer-by.

This man was arrayed in a parti-colored suit, half of it brown, the other half dirty white. It was the prisoners' uniform of the county jail. When the man cursed and attempted to yank himself away, the cap'n manhandled him thoroughly and finished by tripping his capture and sweeping up the sidewalk

with him. It was the first opportunity the cap'n had had to relieve some of his pent-up feelings, and in a grim way he enjoyed the affair. There was a muffled crash when the man tumbled, there was another crash when the cap'n gave him a sweep across the walk. Puddles of liquid formed in the sidewalk hollows, and the liquid gave forth a pungent odor. It was whisky. It was evident that the man had been carrying a quart bottle on each hip.

Cap'n Sproul yanked him to his feet.

"What are you doing outside of that jail?" he demanded.

"What right have you got to go banging me around?" blustered the captive.

"Full details of my rights will be handed to you and the other canaries in that cage on the hill a little later," stated the cap'n, careless of the throng that came packing around them. "Just now I ask you again what are you doing outside of that jail?"

"I'm a trusty."

"What are you doing with that liquor on you? Tell me quick before I rub your nose in it."

"I'm let out to do errands."

"Is that one of 'em?" asked the cap'n, kicking at the broken glass.

"Well, men who are jammed into a county jail ought to have a little consolation and relaxation if they've got the money to pay for such," returned the prisoner. "And I ain't going to stand no more fooling from no old gink that ain't got no business butting in," he pursued, getting back his breath and his temper. "You settle for that whisky."

"I'll make that all right with you after I get my jail barroom in full running order," said the cap'n sardonically. "In the meantime, you march along or I'll boot you clear from here to the doghole."

At that moment another man in brown and white came thrusting through the crowd, attracted by the

disturbance. The cap'n grabbed him also.

"Look here! I'm a trusty," expostulated the fellow. "I'm let out on errands." His pockets were stuffed with newspapers, and he carried several paper parcels from which protruded the legs of fowls.

"Them men ain't to blame," volunteered a citizen. "The prisoners have been running loose. They even let one man out to drive a truck team."

"It's a grand idea," said Cap'n Sproul, "and it's a wonder that more jails ain't run on that system. The only trouble with jails has been they ain't made popular enough. I'll give my personal attention to making this jail attract all the best class of criminals." He was talking to the citizens who surrounded him. He was getting rid of some more of his pent-up feelings. "We'll give all prisoners genteel jobs like canvassing for books, selling nursery stock, and other lines that will take 'em around over the country and give 'em a chance to be outdoors and see things. In the meantime, gents," he informed the prisoners, "we'll go up to the jail and smoke segars and talk things over."

"Hit the old loom one on the garret and hear the echo," one of the trustees advised the other. "It's empty."

"Better not," advised a jeering voice from the crowd. "That's the new high sheriff!"

The prisoners' jaws dropped, they stared, and then went along listlessly under the impulse of the thrust the cap'n's heavy hands gave them.

Those hands were ready at their backs whenever they lagged on the way to the jail or when they ventured to look over their shoulders at the grim custodian who convoyed them.

The turnkey who opened the jail's door when the cap'n kicked against it recognized the identity and the authority of this new arrival who scowled at him.



The cap'n manhandled him thoroughly and finished by tripping his capture and sweeping up the sidewalk with him.

"Pipe all hands in this jail to quarters," commanded the new sheriff. "I'm sorry to bother them prisoners that's out playing golf and tending afternoon tea parties, but I've got something on my mind to tell 'em, and I'm afraid it won't keep till supper time."

"I ketch what ye mean," said the turnkey, scrubbing his palm nervously over his chin. "Things have been run loose, but that was the way t'other sheriff would have it. I thought I'd wait till you got here before changing."

"I'm here," returned the cap'n curtly.

"I'm willing to obey all orders," faltered the officer.

"Glad to hear it. You and me won't have trouble if that's your feeling. Obey these orders: Whatever dunnage you've got in the fo'c'sle have it ready to go over the rail to-morrow early. I'm shipping a full new crew. Are there any prisoners in this jail just now except the two I've been chumming with?"

"They're all in except—except—"

"Except what's out. That what you mean?"

"There are six over to the other

sheriff's farm working for him. You wasn't expected quite so quick."

Cap'n Sproul did not bother to comment. He gave the turnkey a look over his shoulder as he started for the sheriff's private office. And the turnkey understood and ordered the jail teamster to lick his horses all the way out to the farm and gallop them all the way back.

An hour later Cap'n Sproul, having been notified that all his charges were assembled in the corridor room, unwrapped his gold badge from the tissue paper in which it had reposed for a couple of years, scrubbed it bright with the cuff of his coat, and pinned it on. Then he unlocked the iron door, and went in and stood on the little platform that commanded a view of the corridors.

"You fellows in the waist, there, come aft here to the break of the poop!" he ordered in stentorian tones, pointing to the edge of his platform.

They advanced without much enthusiasm. They expected a speech.

"Anybody down there who doesn't know who I am?" he inquired.

Silence indicated that they seemed to know.

"Then there's nothing more to be said. Only this: You'll stay at home here from this time on so that we can get better acquainted."

There was a click in his tones that made that little remark a pregnant one. He scrubbed his sleeve over his badge again and departed. They blinked until the door closed behind him. Then, feeling confidence in numbers and proximity, they barked derisively.

In the jail office the cap'n found two stalwart men whom he had known and used when he had been sheriff previously. They had come in answer to his call over the telephone.

"I appoint you jail deputies," he informed them. "If they keep up that

barking for two minutes longer, go in and lock them in their kennels."

But locking the prisoners up—and the deputies attended to that duty promptly at the end of the two minutes—only aggravated the disturbance. The men had been having so much license and liberty that any curtailment of their privileges stirred their rancor. They put their faces to the bars of their cells, and howled raucously in chorus.

The new sheriff personally carried into the jail the nozzle of one fire hose, and his two deputies manned others.

"There's nothing like having a place clean in order to have men happy and contented in it," he told his officers. "They have let this jail get dirty, and I don't blame the prisoners for making a stir about it. Swab decks and do it thorough!"

Ten minutes later there was not a gasp left in one of the twenty-five half-drowned and dripping prisoners.

"Any time you find more dirt just holler," advised the cap'n from the platform. "When you holler, I'll know you have found more dirt. There's plenty of water left in the reservoir."

Returning to the sanctity of his office from that soul-comforting run-in, Cap'n Sproul found a stranger awaiting him. He was a pulpy individual with a shiny bald head, but possessing a riotous growth of red whiskers which ambuscaded his face nearly to his eyes. He stood in the middle of the floor, straddling an imitation-leather suit case. Such of his face as was visible to the sheriff suggested considerable perturbation of feelings.

"It's a nice condition of affairs when a man of my position and a deacon in the church has to flee to the county jail," he asserted. "But I've done it and here I am."

Cap'n Sproul took off his wet coat and hung it on a nail, giving his visitor a looking over as he did so.

"Lock me up," commanded the stran-

ger, "and the more locks on the door, the better. I've fled here, I say."

"I'm afraid you haven't heard the latest news," remarked the sheriff, "and are depending on past reports about this place. This jail ain't the kind of a fleeing place it used to be."

"I'm not here to jest and joke, sir."

"Nor I, either," averred the cap'n, feeling of his shirt to discover whether it was too wet to be worn with safety.

"Then do what I tell you to do."

"I don't blame you for coming here, judging from what you must have heard about the genteel way this boarding house was run. The place was on its way to be popular. The only thing that sticks me is that you're coming here and asking to be locked up. That hasn't been the custom here. It has been run merely as a place to sleep nights in. But you'll have to spend your vacation somewhere else. New administration. Strictly a jail." The cap'n sat down at his desk.

The stranger came to the desk and set both soggy hands on it and leaned his pulpy personality over the cap'n.

"See here, Mister Sheriff, I've got to make you understand me better. I need protection. I'm going to take you into my confidence." He spoke low, his tones became wheedling, he tried to be confidential. "My name is Rosalvin Vittum—Deacon Vittum—and I live in this county and have standing. But a woman is making my life miserable for me. She threatens me. I'm afraid of her. I can't run away and be wandering to and fro on the earth. I want to stay here in this jail till I can make some plans and snug up my property. I hope you see."

"You married?" snapped the cap'n.

"No."

"Then the trouble with that one woman is that you want to marry some other woman, hey?"

Mr. Vittum's countenance flushed to the hue of his whiskers.

"There's a long story goes with it, and if you'll listen—"

"This is my busy day," said Cap'n Sproul. "This is a jail, and not a marriage bureau."

"And I've come to a jail as a taxpayer in this county. You harbor criminals here who never paid a cent of taxes—all free. I demand protection here from a dangerous person—and I can't fight back against a woman even if she is desperate. A taxpayer has got the right to use his jail when he needs it and is willing to pay his own board."

"Never saw or heard of any law to that effect."

"Then it's time some was made. I'll see to it that some is made. I've got standing and position. I'll have some law that will make a jail worth while to the men who pay taxes."

"After the law is made, bring it around, and we'll see what can be done. In the meantime, you'd better quit lallygagging around the women. This general flirtation business is full of reefs and shoals."

"Is that the kind of treatment you give a fellow being who's in distress?"

"I don't know as this county is called upon to handle the love affairs of a gallivanter," returned the cap'n, squinting along the coruscating scalp of Mr. Vittum.

"Criminals harbored, hey, and honest taxpayers can't use their own property when it comes to a desperate situation?"

"Hain't anything laid down in the law, so fur's I know it, that flirting deacons have to be took care of."

Mr. Vittum drove a fist down on the sheriff's desk. The fist sploshed rather than cracked.

"We'll see!" he squealed. He started for the door.

"Here! You've left your volucus," warned the cap'n.

But Mr. Vittum did not halt. "We'll

see!" he repeated. He rushed out and away.

"I've heard of jails being run in all kinds of ways," mused Cap'n Sproul, beginning work upon his book of commitments in order that he might better understand the personnel of his guests, "but when men come in here, like that tufted Houdan rooster done a little spell ago, a 'cussed queer reputation must have been earned by this jail. But give me two weeks in here, and it won't be advertised as no popular place of resort."

A scant quarter of an hour later two men came struggling into his presence. One was Deacon Vittum, much discomposed, bubbling queer sounds through his whiskers, his face the color of a peony above his flaming beard. The other was a constable of the shire town, heralded as such by his obtrusive nickel badge.

With his free hand he was holding a blood-spotted handkerchief to his ear, and when he released Mr. Vittum, feeling that his prisoner was now secure, he limped to a chair and rolled his trouser leg up.

"Yes, it's just as I reckoned it was," he said, clinching his convictions. "He bit me in the leg, too. Sheriff, this critter says he's a deacon from West Vienny, but if he ain't dog-faced Jo-Jo, the man eater, I'll eat handcuffs for breakfast the rest of my life."

"I'll show ye!" panted Mr. Vittum. "I'll show ye whether a taxpayer has got any rights in his own county if he wants to use his own jail to protect himself!"

"I was standing on Main Street minding my own business," lamented the constable, "and he come up and looked at my badge and flammed me a belt in the face and knocked me down and bit my ear and bit my leg when I kicked at him. And the devilish old window mop won't explain why he done it. I haven't let the grass grow under

my feet. Judge Pote seen the whole thing right out of his office window and he has committed this man to jail, charged with attempt to murder. And here's the papers."

The constable limped across the room and laid the document before the sheriff.

"So you've gone to work and busted into this jail so as to increase my troubles when I've already got troubles enough, hey?" demanded the cap'n. "Vittum, you'll be sorry you done it. It's a snide trick, and I ain't going to have any mercy on you."

"You didn't have any mercy in the first place. I came here polite and appealing, and you wouldn't let me in. But now I'm in and no thanks to you."

"I shan't hold out my little porringer for thanks—don't fret," the cap'n assured him. He called to one of his deputies. "This seems to be a desperate character. Put him in the middle of the bottom tier, and tame him with bread and water."

"That's better than stalled ox that's got to be et out where a woman is threatening ye with a shotgun," declared Mr. Vittum, as he was led away to his dungeon.

"I ought to have taken him to the insane hospittle—that's where he belongs," averred the constable. "But they'd coddle him there. I want him in a place where the wicking will be put to him."

"He won't be coddled," stated the cap'n sententiously.

Therefore, when one of the deputies reported to him that evening that Mr. Vittum demanded to see the sheriff at once, the cap'n was not especially interested. He grunted and shook his head and kept at his papers.

The next morning Mr. Vittum's message was repeated.

"He seems to be taking on something orful," said the deputy. "Is raving."

"Any particular complaint?"

"Says it's worse inside the jail than



His custodian set vicious grip into the flaming mass of hair, and tugged.

it would be outside, and that the devil himself must have planned what has happened."

"It ain't noways difficult to agree pernickity with him on that," said the cap'n, unimpressed. "I don't cal'late to make this jail any such bower of joy as it has been in the past two years. And as for plans, what has happened was planned by Vittum himself. Let him call himself all the names he wants to."

To a third and even more urgent mes-

sage of complaint which came later in the day the cap'n paid no more heed than he had to the previous appeals. He had found Mr. Vittum extremely rambunctious in certain matters, and decided that this uproar was more of the same sort.

"Tell Vittum that I'm too busy to trot prisoners on my knee and sing 'em lullabies," was the return message he sent.

The message was delivered to the trusty—a prisoner whom the deputy had assigned to take charge of the lower corridor. Sheriff Sproul was pursuing the custom usual in country jails where help is scarce because the taxpayers refuse appropriations. This person was a squat and surly individual with sagging jowls and pendulous lips and drunkard's red-rimmed eyes. He had spent so much of his life in the county jails of the State that he understood all of prison routine, and made a handy man to be intrusted with minor duties.

He swaggered his way back to Vittum's cell.

The convulsed face of the prisoner was pressed against

the bars.

"Sheriff says t'ell wit' you, and to shut your yawp," reported the trusty. "And now I've got something to say on my own account. You've done dirt to my sister, and now I've got you where I want you. I took out them first messages because I hadn't got that new sheriff just sized up. But now that I've found out that he don't give a hoot what happens to you, and that what you send to him goes in one ear

and out the other, why, you and me will have this out together. I don't take out no more complaints from you—see? Will you marry my sister?"

"No," yelped Deacon Vittum. He shoved his face forward and his whiskers jutted through the bars.

His custodian set vicious grip into the flaming mass of hair, and tugged.

"Out it comes if you don't marry my sister," he growled. "I'll use it for a new mattress in my cell—I need one."

The prisoner howled dolefully and long.

When the key clanked in the door of espionage, the trusty released the whiskers.

"Any man who howls in this jail will have the hose turned on him," announced the deputy.

"We've got ye coming and going—me and the other bosses in this place," said the trusty, swelling his chest. "Better mind your eye."

The victim sat on his pallet and groaned.

"Didn't know I was in jail, hey?"

"I knew you must be in jail somewhere," snarled Mr. Vittum. "But I didn't know the devil had located you here to abuse an honest man."

"Honest man! You promised to marry my sister, and you sneaked the bargain."

"I didn't promise to marry her. She was nothing but my hired housekeeper. I paid her and she kept her place where she belonged till she heard I was going to get married. Then she made a fool of herself."

"She expected she was going to marry you. She told me so."

"She had no right to expect it. I minded my business, and she ought to have minded hers."

"The neighbors expected it, too," pursued the brother. "And when the neighbors expect a woman to marry a man, it puts the woman in wrong if the man doesn't marry her. She's got

her self-respect to look out for—my sister has. She's standing up for her rights."

"It's nothing but a lot of old fools torching on a dangerous woman. But what am I talking with you for, you miserable renegade? The devil's in the two of you. She hid her nature till she was crossed and it broke out."

He rose and advanced, shaking his fists. The brother made another grab for the tempting whiskers, but Mr. Vittum dodged back into the gloom of his cell. But he was not safe from persecution. The trusty secured a long stick that was used to push open ventilators, and he began to prod Mr. Vittum.

"Better agree to marry my sister," he urged. "There ain't no court for you to be tried in till two months from now. You've got to stay here, and I'm serving ninety days because I'm a confirmed drunk, so the judge says. Better marry my sister, and have the wedding here in jail. If you don't, I'll have you in a padded cell in the bughouse. I'm going to think up some new ways to aggravate you. Sheriff won't bother me. I've found that out."

Mr. Vittum began to shout.

"Better stop hollering," advised the trusty. "They'll turn the hose on you and let me hold the nozzle. I'll stick it in between the bars and blow them whiskers off'n your face."

Finally, when Mr. Vittum seemed to be too much prostrated by rage, pain, and weariness to do more than hump his back and allow the brother to prod his soggy person, the trusty put up the stick.

"It's going to be a cheerfuller ninety days for me than I thought it would be," he informed the unhappy captive. "Before I get done with you, I'll have my sister married off. It's bound to come out that way. I'm a great matchmaker, get me started."

It became evident that, having applied himself to matchmaking, the brother

had decided to be assiduous. As trusty and as watchman he was allowed the freedom of the lower corridor at night. As often as he considered the moment right, he came with his stick and poked the luckless Mr. Vittum, tossing restlessly on his pallet, and inquired in a husky whisper: "Will you marry my sister?"

"No," quavered the prisoner, afraid to shout the anathema that filled his soul.

"You will before I get done with you," the brother informed him, after desisting from the punching.

In spite of his natural gallantry where the sex was concerned, Cap'n Sproul whirled from his desk the next forenoon and scowled at a woman who entered his office. As a matter of fact, she invited the look she received, for her own expression was distinctly unamiable. She was a big, square-hewed woman, and the cap'n felt intuitively that she had come on business connected with Mr. Vittum. She really seemed to be a complement of that individual; she wore as exuberant a growth of red hair on her head as he wore on his chin. According to the cap'n's whimsical reflection, the two of them might divide hair and strike a fine general average.

His suspicions in regard to her were promptly confirmed.

"Have you a worm named Vittum held here in durance vile?" she inquired.

"Have aforesaid Vittum on my books, marm, but the constable he bit don't agree that he's a worm."

She slapped a letter across her palm, and knitted her brows.

"Anybody who will write to a woman that he has run and hid himself away in a jail because he is afraid of a woman is a worm," she declared.

"This is my busy day, marm, and we won't have any dispute about special varieties of insects. What do you want?"

"I want to have a talk with that worm."

"Seejng that I've just got this jail calmed down and in fair running order, I ain't encouraging any new riots, marm. Can't let you see him."

"I'll see him if I have to tear through your bolts and bars."

"That will be a little different from tearing a breadth of gingham, marm. You'd better not try it."

He met her glowering gaze with one equally defiant.

"Don't you recognize a heartbroken woman when you see one?" she demanded. "Mr. Vittum loves me. He is going to marry me."

"Bulletins he has issued up to date don't seem to indicate-it," stated the cap'n, remembering Mr. Vittum's heated remarks at their first interview. "I ain't condoning anything he has done in your case, marm. It's none of my business. I didn't give him any help in getting into this jail. But seeing that he has paid a pretty high price to get in here, I'm going to let him enjoy his privacy."

"I'll camp side of this jail till I do get at him."

"I offer no objections, marm."

"I demand that you tell him I am here."

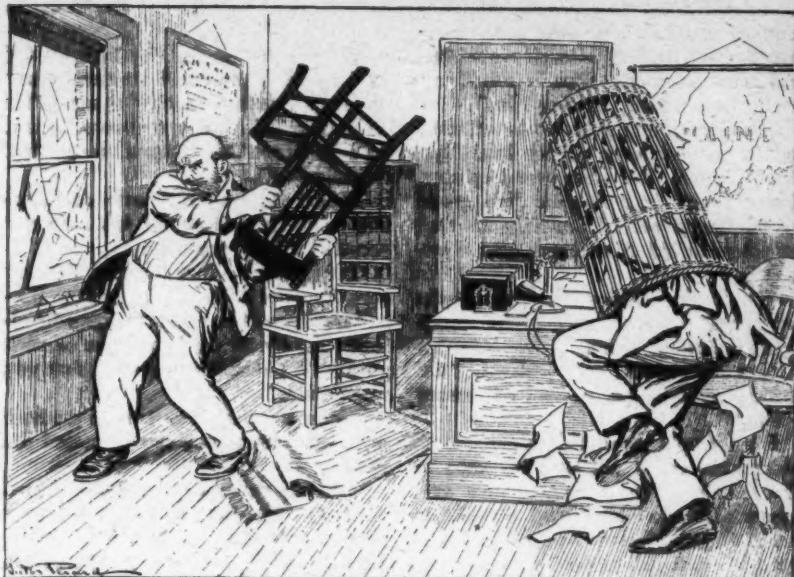
"Shan't harrow his feelings, marm."

They crossed looks once more, and then she departed, muttering threats.

"I haven't had much time before this to wonder why Vittum was desperate enough to do what he done so as to get into jail," mused the cap'n. "But I'm understanding him enough now so as to sympathize with him."

On that account he was more tolerant in the case of the next visitor who came inquiring for Mr. Vittum. She was a little woman with meek eyes and plaintive tones, and she hinted at a consuming affection for the captive deacon.

"For a man who can't brag any more'n he can on looks, that girl seems



Then Mr. Vittum broke out a window with a chair, and dove out.

to be a devil among the wimmen," the cap'n blurted. "Or is it because he has money?"

"He is prosperous, Mr. Sheriff, but I don't care for money. I love him for himself, and it is a designing woman who is making trouble for us."

"The world is full of wicked critters like that, marm. I sympathize with Vittum more'n I did. Perhaps there will be some way of working out of it. But just now Vittum is in a mess. He has got to be tried for licking that constable."

"I feel that he did it on account of me."

"Probably. Love will drive a man to do queer pranks. The least I can do is cheer him up all I can. So I'm going to let you go in and chat with him."

He escorted her to the door admitting to the cell room, and gave her into the custody of the red-eyed trusty.

"Take this lady to Deacon Vittum's

cell, and let her cheer him up all she has a mind to," was the sheriff's orders to his minion. "I reckon he needs it."

"Shouldn't wonder if he did," admitted the trusty, ducking his respectful obeisance. "He don't seem to chirk up as much as a deacon ought to when he's enjoying the comforts of religion."

When the door closed on the sheriff, the little woman faced the trusty. She braced back her shoulders. The meek eyes were like holes showing fires within. The thin lips were set together like strips of steel.

"So you are in *this jail now*, are you?"

"Well, I've got to be in some jail, haven't I? None of my folks want me around—not even you—and you're my sister. And here I am doing a good turn for you. I've 'most got Vittum—what's left of him—saying he'll marry you. It's hard work. I've poked him till he's dented all over. You and me

hain't had much luck in life. But our luck must have turned when Vittum went and rammed himself into this jail. Think of it! Him in a cell and me on the outside, bossing him!"

"Perhaps you're going to be of some use in this life even at this late day," she admitted. Her voice was deep now. It had a note in it like the deep growl of an angry cat. "Lead me to that bald-headed old Nicodemus of a wart-hog."

"Don't do nothing too rash," the brother advised. "I've got him into a terrible state of mind."

"Let me at him!" she insisted. "I'll fix his mind so that he will see reason with it."

Even Cap'n Sproul's absorption in his papers could not dull his ears to the hullabaloo in the jail a few moments after he had seated himself at his desk. But before he could investigate in outraged person, Deacon Vittum's lady caller had emerged hurriedly into the jail office. Her eyes were again meek. They were teary. Distress was etched into her countenance.

"He didn't seem to recognize me," she sobbed. "He began to rave awful. His troubles must have turned his brain. Can't you let him out and give him to me to take care of?"

"Only way is for him to give bail—and when he come in here, it didn't seem to be his notion that he wanted to get out, marm."

"His mind must have been giving way even then. It's awful to see a good man so wrought up as he is."

"It's a wonder to me your calling on him didn't bring him around and pacify him," observed the cap'n thoughtfully. "I kept a—I've been keeping folks out that I thought might rasp him the wrong way. But we'll work the thing along easy and careful. You come in again to-morrow and see what you can do to soothe him. In the meantime, I'll tell that trusty to tend right strictly

to him and handle him the best he knows how."

Late that afternoon the high sheriff of Cuxabexis returned to the county buildings, having traveled a somewhat wide circuit in order to serve certain legal papers which his predecessor had neglected.

One of the deputies, with considerable concern written on his features, accosted him in the office.

"Mr. Sheriff, that Deacon Vittum says he's got to see you about a life-and-death matter. Hain't stopped hollering hardly all day while you've been gone. Wouldn't take my word that you wasn't here."

"General orders is to turn on the hose in them obstreperous cases," stated the sheriff.

"Obeyed general orders and turned on hose. But he spit water and kept right on hollering. I ain't advising no superior officer, but he sartin does seem to want to see you."

"Well, if he is as you say he is, and water didn't take effect, legally, officially, and according to general orders, you bring him in here. That hollering has got to be stopped before the rest of them turkey buzzards out there take it up."

Two deputies brought in Mr. Vittum, struggling to control him. His whole soggy being was palpitating. His eyes goggled, foam flecked his contorted lips—he was to all ocular sense a madman.

"He's her brother," he began to shout the moment he caught sight of the cap'n. "He's her brother with a stick, and he's punched me fuller of holes than a pod-auger days' tin lantern! He's her brother—she's his sister—and the sister is worse than the brother—brother and sister—one is—"

"Shut up!" roared the sheriff.

"She's her brother—her sister—I tell you I've been driven crazy, and—"

"Leave that man here and get out

and shut the door," the cap'n directed the deputies.

When they were gone, he shouted the raving deacon into silence. He would not listen to a word:

"Of course you're crazy," he informed the unhappy captive. "I can see you're crazy. Nobody but a crazy man would have done what you did from the start. I ain't going to listen to scuff stuff from a lunatic. You shut up, I say! I'm running this jail. I know what's good for a prisoner. You need to be nursed back to a realizing sense—and that little woman's going to do it. Forget that other woman and her brother. Shut up!" He advanced on the choking, expostulating Vittum, and grabbed him by his collar and shook him. "I don't allow prisoners to talk back to me in my own jail. I tell you I know what's good for you. That trusty will nurse you—sit by you. That little woman will come in every day and cheer you up. Go back to your cell. You've got to be made to know what's good for you."

"You don't mean that," bellowed the deacon. "You must—"

"No prisoner says 'must' to me."

"But she is—"

"I can see what she is—and I saw what the other one was. Shut up, I say!"

"You're going to—"

"Let that little woman come in every day and cheer you back to your senses."

"You condemned old numbhead—"

"One more yip out of you and I'll jam you into the doghole," bellowed the cap'n. "You're a fancy kind of a deacon, *you are!*"

Mr. Vittum, thundered into silence, shaken into helplessness, began to shuttle his gaze around the room like a baited rat. Suddenly he sprang toward the desk and picked up the huge waste-paper basket in which the new sheriff had been casting the ruck of useless

papers from the past régime. It was half as tall as a man. Vittum upended it and drove it down over the sheriff's head and shoulders with the strength and fury of a desperate man. It pinned the cap'n's arms, and the wadded papers wedged it tightly to him. Then Mr. Vittum broke out a window with a chair, and dove out, tumbled down the terrace, and fled across the street, dodging into alleys and byways.

Some minutes elapsed before the infuriated Cap'n Sproul was released and took to the trail.

A gasping small boy, beating his fists on the outside portal, gave him a clew—a fat man wearing a jail suit had run in among the nest of cottage houses that faced the jail.

Turning a corner, Cap'n Sproul found a woman sitting on the closed doors of a cellar outside rollway. Just before he turned the corner a bang had indicated the violent and sudden closing of those doors. The woman glared at the cap'n. But she also exhibited some discomfiture. She was the square-hewed giantess of the red hair.

"Get up off'm them doors," commanded the panting sheriff. "You can't fool me! You've got him there."

"I'm sitting on my own sister's roll-way, minding my own business, and I won't get up for you or anybody else."

"I don't know how he happened to run into the trap you set for him, marm, but he's there—and queer things do happen. Get up or I'll yank you up."

But when he advanced, flanked by his two deputies, to enforce his orders, she rose, seized a bean pole from a bunch close at hand, and laid about herself with the fury of a battling amazon.

Three men against a woman, in that spirit fought, could not avail. They retreated.

"It's going hard with you, marm, for this," warned the sheriff. "That man



She seized a bean pole from a bunch close at hand, and laid about herself with the fury of a battling amazon.

is in there, and we must have him. You're resisting officers."

"I'm defending my sister's house."

"We'll have to rush her," said a deputy. "We may get a few welts, but here comes a crowd, and the folks mustn't see a woman backing us down."

"Come on!" shouted the cap'n, bending arm over his head.

But once again a small boy sleuth intervened.

He informed the sheriff in tones shrill with excitement that the fat man had escaped from the house through a window; it was evident that the fugitive had not trusted that his Boadicea would be able to hold out against the besiegers much longer.

"Arrest her just the same," commanded the angry sheriff, as he started on the fresh pursuit. "She has aided and abetted a prisoner to escape."

But the fresh pursuit was fruitless. While the crowd was gathering at one side of the house to survey the conflict at the rollway, Mr. Vittum had had a clear field for his get-away. The sheriff and his men searched until far into the evening, and found no prisoner. An element of mystery was added to the case, because a full half dozen persons were found who declared that they had heard the report of a gun or of some weapon soon after Mr. Vittum had begun his second flight among the nested cottages.

On his return to the jail, the cap'n was further exasperated to discover that the red-eyed trusty had walked out and away; he had been given the privileges of the guardroom to take charge while the deputies hurried and scurried.

"Seeing that there ain't hide nor hair of that Vittum to be found," confided

the ireful cap'n to one of his subalterns, "I'm taking comfort in hoping that noise wasn't a gun going off. I'm hoping 'twas Vittum busting up like a paper bag full of water, and that he won't ever be heard of again. Has that red-haired she-tiger decided to give bail?"

"She's setting up as straight as a cob in her cell, and says she'll see you in hackenny first," reported the officer. "She thinks she's spiting you, I reckon. Says you made the man she loved run away and be lost forever."

"Furthermore," reported another officer, "she says she's in durance vile—so she calls it—and ain't done nothing to deserve it, and ain't going to eat, so she can show you up to the world for what you be."

"I know what I am without being showed," muttered the sheriff. "I'm a damnation fool for letting myself be hornswoggled into taking this office after I was once well shet of it."

"If she sticks out, I reckon we've got to feed her forcible like they do them hunger strikers in Europe," complained a deputy. "I've helped sling an ox to shoe him, and have wrassled shotes at butchering time, but I swear if I don't hate to tackle that female giant. Her hair is enough to scorch anybody—say nothing of what she can do with her fists. I reckon if they get out any new war maps right away, the location of this jail will be marked with a red circle, all right."

Just then the sheriff's telephone rang. When he answered, a voice asked him to wait a moment.

The unctuous voice of the governor oozed into his ear.

"Just a word, Sheriff Sproul, to congratulate you on having got nicely settled in your office. You're happy, of course?"

The sheriff choked an indistinguishable word into the receiver.

"That's good. I knew you'd have no

trouble in straightening all matters out. Good night and good luck."

"It's lucky I was so mad I couldn't talk," the cap'n confided to himself. "That's the only luck I can see about this thing. I couldn't do myself justice over the telephone. I'll get a little madder and then go up and talk it to him, face to face."

But the next five days he devoted himself solely and assiduously to a search for the missing Mr. Vittum. The integrity of his jail demanded that the prisoner be found. As to the missing trusty, he decided that the county would be lucky if that leech ran away and stayed away.

On the evening of the fifth day, Deacon Rosalvin Vittum walked into the sheriff's office, and sat down limply in the chair nearest the door. He was a broken, saggy, sloppy, dispirited, woe-begone Mr. Vittum. He sat and stared mournfully at the astonished sheriff for a full minute before the cap'n gathered himself enough to pop a "Well!" at him.

"You've done it," stated Mr. Vittum, in a tone that sounded like pounding on the head of an empty barrel.

"Done what?"

"I ought to come in here and rave and tear and swear and holler. I intended to come in here and rave and swear. But I done it once and it didn't do any good for me. So I just sigh and say you've done it."

"Done what, you tormented lunatic?"

"Drove me into the clutches of that she-tiger. I'm married to her."

"I've got that she-tiger locked up in this jail for aiding and abetting you, and we're feeding her gruel through a tin funnel."

"Now, I ought to rave and swear and tear! But I can't do it. I've been through too much. I've been abused and mallyhacked too much by that she-tiger and her brother."

"Do you mean to say that the meek

little woman I sent in to cheer you up—”

“She saw me running, and she shot me in the leg with birdshot, and kept me locked up in her house, and she and her brother—and you must have let him out of this jail on purpose—they tied me in a garret and they—Oh, there ain’t any use in talking what they done to me. I’m having hard work enough to keep my mind right without remembering it. I gave in and married her. It didn’t make much difference to me after a time what I done. Now that I’m married and have got to support her, she says to me to come back here to jail and stay as long as the law will keep me—she don’t care. Put me into my cell.”

The sheriff looked at him for a long time and was silent.

“And that woman I’ve got locked up?” he asked, at last.

“She was trying to save me from that she-tiger. She was trying all the time to brace me up to fight back. She’s a good woman, and she’s got a lot of spirit, and wasn’t after my money, because she’s got plenty of her own. She would have saved me if you had only let her alone. But I had to run when you tackled her. Oh, no matter about it, I’ll go into my cell and die. I’ll die rather than live with that other one.”

“All I’ve got to say is that looks is deceiving,” stated the sheriff. “You ought to have explained to me.”

“You wouldn’t let me explain,” said the unhappy man, his tones dull with utter despair. “You went ahead and done it.”

Cap’n Sproul sat at his desk and gazed on the miserable victim of this mistake, and pondered for a long time.

Then he got up and took Mr. Vittum by the hand. He pressed its moist and limp mass.

“You go out and turn to the left and take a slow walk down the street, keep-

ing in the shadows, Vittum,” he counseled. “And don’t you come back.”

“But how—”

“I’ve got some influence with the governor, I’ve got some change to slip to the constable you bit, and I want to straighten out this jail into a sensible kind of a place. I can’t do it with you and your various attachments hanging around here. No thanks! When I’ve made a mistake, I always try to rectify it. You don’t owe me anything. You walk slow so that woman can catch up with you after I let her out. She has stuck and hung here in spite of all I could do to get her out. I’m glad to be able to use you as an inducement for her to skip. You two stroll along and talk it over.”

He hesitated, gazing after Mr. Vittum as the latter shambled toward the door, and then hurried and overtook him.

“Naturally, I ain’t usually advising anything like I’m going to suggest to you,” he whispered. “But there are some cases where even a deacon might be justified in eloping, provided he stands ready to fix the alimony all right, seeing that money is all some women hanker for.”

For the first time in the interview Mr. Vittum showed signs of animation.

“Send her along out, sheriff,” he pleaded. “She’s a good woman with a lot of spirit, and she’ll help me fight this thing out to a finish.”

While the sheriff stood watching Mr. Vittum’s disappearance into the gloom, a figure emerged from that same gloom, wobbling on unsteady legs. It was the prodigal trusty.

“I’ve come back to my only home—hadder come back,” he said, finishing with a hiccup. Sister kicked me out.”

Thereupon, Sheriff Sproul poised himself carefully and kicked him in—and having thus relieved his feelings somewhat, was able to muster a smile when he unlocked the door of the red-haired woman’s cell.



R. EMMETT OWEN
1914

Coal-Scuttle Mary

By Mary Dickerson Donahey

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

MISS MARGARET CARNEY realized that her family needed a cook. It is a very serious condition for any family, but when the particular group of people to be supplied with that commodity is a Blackwell's Island family, and must find its cook from among the gangs of women prisoners who are brought up day after day on the big *Thomas S. Brennan*, from the police courts of the town, finding a good cook becomes an extra hard task.

The present incumbent had just decorated the chambermaid's head with a bowl which, when put there, had been

full of hot soup, and it was as Miss Margaret patiently, but not cheerfully, repaired the damaged scalp, frock, and feelings of the latter lady that she decided a change must be made.

"'Tis not the first time, ye do be knowin,'" sobbed the chambermaid as she extracted soup from her eyes. "'Twas poor, innocent old 'Almshouse John,' as peaceful a man as any woman could find to fight with, who got a plate in his middle no longer ago than yesterday. An' she run the laundress out with the potato masher, though if I'd been Annie, it's a better scrap I'd 'a'



The present incumbent had just decorated the chambermaid's head with a bowl, which, when put there, had been full of hot soup.

put up, for she had an iron wid her. An' the kitchen help's that scared all the time——”

“That's enough, Rosie,” said Miss Margaret. “I know. She can cook, but she's impossible in every other way. You tell John or Pat or both, if necessary, to take her back to the workhouse. I'll go down to the noon boat and see if I can get somebody that's just come up.”

“If so be yez could get hold of ‘Coal-scuttle Mary,’ now, wouldn't it be grand?” queried Rosie, her still-watering eyes emitting a gleam of happiness at the very thought.

“It would,” said Miss Margaret fervently. “Now, Rosie, you go about your work up here. Don't you go near

that woman again, or I won't answer for the consequences. Oh, there! You know perfectly well that I know you must have done something to get that bowl of soup on your head! I'm simply sending the cook away because little things like that are happening too often, with too many people. Be good now.”

“Yes'm,” said Rosie meekly. And then, “Do yez keep an eye out for Mary.”

“I think Coal-scuttle Mary must have left New York,” said Miss Margaret. “It's an awfully long time since she was up before—six months fully. You were here then, too, weren't you? The time that gang of men from the ‘pen’ were fixing our roof?”

“I was that,” assented Rosie. “An'

Mary taking the poor fellers in—wid your permission—and fillin' 'em up full of good grub for once. But sure she's always feeding folks. Filling every kitchen where she works that full of company, she ain't no place to sit herself but the coal scuttle—which is where she got her name. There mustn't nobody ever think she got it from being dirty. It's not from choice, but kindness, Mary got to sitting there."

"I know," said Miss Margaret, as she pinned on her hat and started down to the almshouse landing, toward which the *Brennan* was already pushing her clumsy old ferryboat nose.

Margaret Carney reached the dock just as the prisoner deck hands ran out the gangplank, and stood watching while the freight, for the storehouse near at hand, and the passengers, voluntary and involuntary, came off.

There was a little group destined for the almshouse, old, worn folk, some sad and sorry, some delighted at the prospect of a home where rent day would never come and meals would be regular and certain. There were sick folk for the Metropolitan Hospital; and, last of all, the workhouse gangs—long lines of sodden, pitiful men, and other lines, almost as long, of bedraggled, still more pathetic women.

Miss Carney was so used to the scene that her mind had no room for any side of it but the practical side, and she was beginning to look rather discouraged when suddenly the last of the women limped into sight—a slender figure, her clothes torn, her hat gone, both eyes black and swelling, a scratch that traced a dull-red line from cheek to chin. And yet, as Miss Carney looked, and looked again, she gave no sign of disgust—only a smile of real pleasure!

"Coal-scuttle Mary!" she cried jubilantly, nodded to the trim matron in charge of the women, and, as Mary was an odd one, fell into line beside her.

"My, my, but I'm glad to see you!"

said Miss Carney, in a tone of welcome that would have horrified one of the missionaries.

"It's a wonder yez knew me, Miss Margy, dear," said Mary. "Me wid a mouse on each eye, an' me map all scratched, an' a game knee that's botherin' me."

"I never knew you to fight before in all the years you've been coming here, Mary," said the trim matron severely. "You mustn't get bad habits in your old age."

"'Tis not bad habits, but bad whisky, is to blame," said Mary, with what was meant for a twinkle in her poor eyes. "An' shure, I bought the best I cud afford at that, an' I spent a lot of money. Why they can't be givin' tradin' stamps at saloons I don't see. Then I could count up afterward, an' see how much I'd spint, an' be kind of injoyin' it over ag'in by proxy, so to speak, in me non-private room in the Hotel de Blackwell."

"Silence in the line!" commanded the matron, though there was a bit of a smile round her lips.

And the titter Mary had roused died away as the long line of women entered the big gray-stone prison and finally entered the women's wing, where Miss Carney climbed up into the matron's chair and waited while the histories of the women were taken, and they received medical attention, baths, and prison clothes.

The doctor did a much better job on Mary than Miss Carney had any reason to expect, and when her new cook came out, looking jaunty even with her clumsy prison dress and blanket, her bruises, and her limp, the two started sociably side by side for home.

But though Mary joked and laughed as usual, there was to Miss Carney something strained, something unnatural, in her voice and manner, and presently she said, "Mary, something's wrong. What is it? Out with it."

The laugh went from Coal-scuttle Mary's face and voice. Her figure drooped. Suddenly she faced the girl beside her.

"Miss Carney," she said, "how old do yez think I am?"

"How—how old?" stammered Miss Carney. "Why—forty, maybe."

"Ah—so much fer the life I've led! I'm scarce within ten years of that, Miss Margy. And not too old to be in love."

"In love!" And Miss Carney, to whom the words had a meaning she could not associate with such as poor, battered Mary, shrank away. Happily Mary never noticed.

"Yes, I'm in love," she said heavily. "In love for the first time, too. Miss Margy, except for the drink, I've kept pretty straight. I've always thought I couldn't help that—didn't care to try helpin' it. I was a gutter brat. My mother was proud of the number of times she'd been 'up.' I thought it was pretty fine to have a prison record like hers. My father must 'a' been decent. I can just remember him. Well—I thought long's I only drank, I was pretty decent, too! I knew there was folks that didn't do it, but they weren't my kind of folks.

"And then—yez remember the 'pen' gang that yez let me feed in my kitchen them bitter days last winter? Shure yez do. I seen yez peekin' through the little winder in the stairs. Now don't go mindin', Miss Margy. I never told, an' I didn't blame yez. I knew it was a sight—me old basemint kitchen, wid the light from the double doors streamin' across the boys in stripes crowded round me table, an' the kaper tryin' t' look as if he didn't care what I did or didn't, he was that high-toned and important, but keepin' his weather eye out all the time to see he got the tidbits, an' me old stove a-glowin', an' me a-dishin' out goodies from the old fryin' pan to their plates. I'll bet yez were often wishin' yez could join in the party."

"I was," said Miss Carney truthfully. "I was, Mary."

"Ah, I know. An' I know, too, yez seen the fine, black-haired feller, tall an' straight an' not so young as the others, who was always sittin' nearest the stove—an' me. It's him, Miss Margaret. It's him I'm lovin'."

Mary stopped. Miss Carney did remember the man—a fine-looking fellow, as Mary said, with what she had noticed at the time was a strong and pleasant face.

"Who was he?" she asked.

"Jim Brady. 'Twas through our names we made friends, though it's no relationship he should try to claim with such as I. For he's not like me, dearie. He's a straight feller. Up for a mere votin' trouble—nothin' wrong at all. He just did as he'd got a little extra year by year for doin', but this time it was a case o' somebody payin' an' luck was agin' him, an' it was him that paid. A year he got—a year for makin' an honest dollar! 'Tis a hard world sometimes. But, Miss Margy, he fell in love with me! He, what owned t' me he'd not been drunk a dozen times in all his life, he fell in love with me!"

"Well," said Miss Carney sharply, "why not?"

Before her had risen a vision of Coal-scuttle Mary as she had seen her moving about the kitchen, feeding the men of that "pen" gang, giving them good food for their stomachs, cheer and laughter and brightness for their souls. She had not been an unlovely figure—slim, with her dauntlessly jaunty air, her brown hair that curled with the heat of the stove in rings about her face, her Irish-blue eyes twinkling with good humor and laughter, and her smile—Mary's unfailing, heart-warming smile—No wonder Jim Brady fell in love with her.

But Mary shook her head.

"He should not," she said. "Though 'twas heavin' I thought the saints had sent me here on earth. For, Miss Mar-



"My, my, but I'm glad to see you!" said Miss Carney, in a tone of welcome.

garet, we made a plan. I was to go out, an' get the place Terry Noolan has always ready for me in his restaurant. And I was to try—I who had never tried before—to keep the liquor out of me. Terry was to help me save me money, an' Jim to write me regular to brace me up, an' then when his time was done, we was to take my money, an' what he'd saved, an' go away, out into the country, to farm it, as Jim did when he was a kid, an' as he says all men an' women ought, if so be they want to keep decent an' straight."

"Oh, Mary!" cried Miss Carney. "You won for months and then—lost!"

"No, Miss Margaret," said Mary grimly. "I won—an' then I gave up me winnin's. Terry Noolan helped me. His

wife was a saint t' me. I won. But the more the whisky got out of me, the more I saw it wouldn't do. I fought me battles, an' hard ones they were, an' always after one I'd say, 'What's the use? You know it won't do. A clean, fine feller like Jim Brady tied to a drunken old rounder like you.' But I couldn't give up hopin' an' dreamin'. Till the time was 'most up. Then I got me courage in me two hands, an' I put off me the pretty clothes Katie Noolan helped me make, an' I put in the bank all me money but two dollars, an' I changed the account into James Brady's name. Thin I sint him the bank book an' a letter sayin' just a good-by, an' tellin' how I'd gone on a bum at last, that I'd found I couldn't keep straight.

To-day he gets out, Miss Margy. He'll not be havin' me to meet him. But he'll have the money in his pocket. An' good money's better for a man than a bad woman, any day."

"But—but you're not a bad woman!" cried Miss Carney defiantly. "You're good, Mary—good, good, good! Poor Jim—out to-day with his hopes shattered! Mary—very likely it's not too late. Jim very likely hasn't left. Let me hurry down—"

But Coal-scuttle Mary drew herself up with real dignity.

"Miss Margaret," she said, "'tis a confidence you have been hearin'. Yez must not disregard it."

And, abashed, Miss Margaret followed her to the kitchen—heard her old, carefree laugh ring out, almost as it used, as she received the joyful greetings of her mates.

For Coal-scuttle Mary the choice was made. She was marching back, bravely, cheerfully, into the life she had chosen, not now because it was the only life she knew, the only one she cared for, but because it was the only one now possible for her.

But Miss Margaret still hesitated upon the doorstep. Her deepest sympathies had been roused, and with them her strongest convictions. She was certain a woman like Mary Brady could—would—lead a useful, clean life if given the desire and the opportunity, with cheer and help to aid her. And Mary was throwing her chance away. Nobly maybe, unselfishly, but uselessly, Miss Carney thought.

"I don't care," said Miss Carney suddenly, aloud. "It may have been in confidence—but I'll do as I please! If I'm too late, she'll never know. If I fail, she'll never know. If I succeed, she just can't help forgiving me."

She started off at a brisk walk which changed quickly to a run as she realized how time had been flying. Toward the end of her trip, she caught up with the

lumbering old Island ice wagon, pressed it into service, and made the prisoner driver send the astounded horse off at a gallop, while ice cakes and passenger did a fandango as the cart jounced and swayed and bounded.

The queer vehicle drew up before the office of the grim, gray penitentiary just as the warden stepped from its door.

"Margaret Carney—what are you up to now?" demanded that gentleman, trying hard to twist the laugh upon his face into a scowl.

"I want James Brady—to be discharged to-day," announced Miss Margy breathlessly.

A prisoner who had stepped out from behind the warden touched his heavy cap.

"Beg pardon, miss," he said, "Brady's just gone—or going. He's on the launch now."

"Giddap!" exploded Miss Carney. And before the men could gather quite what was happening, the girl herself had turned her clumsy chariot and was urging her steed to still greater—and more weird—exertions.

The little launch was beginning to kick up the water into a white froth beneath her stern, the deck hand had already cast off the ropes, when Miss Carney stopped him, and before an interested audience abstracted a tall, well-set-up chap, with suspiciously short hair and ill-fitting clothes, but a rather strong, fine face. And as the little boat swung out into the East River, its passengers could see the girl and the man in earnest conversation, the old wagon lumbering away at even less than its usual pace, as if its motive power were making up for the extra exertion wrung from him.

Just as the launch touched the other side, the man and the girl whirled and started back up the path to the other end of the Island, walking rapidly, still talking hard.

"'Nother of Miss Margaret's freak

notions, I s'pose," said the deck hand, with a friendly grin.

"Um hum," assented the engineer. "Good luck to it."

And Miss Carney, had she heard, would have told him his wish had come true. Jim Brady had seen things as she saw them.

"And I thought she was deserting me—I thought she didn't care and wouldn't try, and I'd been all wrong about the fine, strong woman I thought I'd found in her," he said happily. "Miss Carney, her letter made me that sick and sore and discouraged, I felt like going and turning into a bum myself."

"I knew it!" cried Miss Carney. "Now you make Mary know it, too. She'll try to fool you. She'll try to bluff you. She's set on sacrificing herself, and you'll have to work like sixty before she'll see it'll be happiness that will pay best. Be careful of every word."

"Don't you be afraid, miss. I'll get her." And Jim Brady's mouth shut with a force that boded well for Mary's future.

"Do. And when she's forgiven us both, I'll see that judge and get her out of here before those poor eyes of hers are fit to be married in," promised Miss Carney.

And, all anxious excitement, she piloted her guest carefully in, secreted him in the dining room, and sent down for Mary to report to her there for a discussion of the dinner menu.

Then she ran.

For half an hour—three-quarters—she sat trying in vain to read, to write, to think of something but Coal-scuttle Mary's love affair. Suddenly, in desperation, she jumped up, and, after a warning cough and a knock, entered the dining room.

Cough and knock had been unnecessary, because unheard. Above all the shades of yellow, purple, blue, upon poor Mary's face, shone bliss, and Jim Brady's eyes were very tender, his deep voice gentle as he said, "Aw, shure, Mary, girl, forget the bum lamps. Who's carin'? It wasn't the outside of you I fell in love with. It was the heart o' you, an' the laugh o' you, an' gee, Mary, I guess first of all it was your cookin'!"

A horrified expression crept over Miss Carney's ecstatic face.

She shut the door and leaned weakly against it.

"My goodness gracious me, whatever have I done!" she exclaimed. "I've just got rid of the best cook who comes to the Island—forever!"



The Breath, Mouth, and Teeth

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

IT would seem that this heading should be reversed and read: "Teeth, mouth, and breath," that the teeth are of greatest importance; but the breath came first, ages before the others. The first gift we receive upon being ushered into this world is atmospheric air; we draw in breath, and that is life. We can subsist upon very little, and we can eke out some kind of an existence under almost any conditions; but we cannot really live and have our being unless we are surrounded by quantities of fresh air and breathe in full, deep drafts of this life-giving elixir.

In the air there are an immense number of "airs"—living, dead, healthy, and noxious. They produce ferments and disturbances as well as health and beauty. If the air in the body is not kept in as free and pure a state as it possibly can be, the breath will be impure; it is a certain index to the conditions existing within, not only physical, but mental and spiritual as well.

Think about it a moment. Many people who are in prime condition physically have a noticeable breath, as a result of some mental or spiritual trouble. "Nervous" people who consider themselves perfectly well are apt to ex-

hale in the air they give out substances that have metallic odors, and that frequently leave in their mouths a metallic taste which they mention casually and dismiss without further thought. Indeed, so many and so varied are the odors carried out of the body by the breath that we have not space here to dwell upon this feature of a subject so large, and one that should be of far greater importance to each of us than it is. So rare is a sweet breath in an adult that it is a matter of comment among its possessor's intimates.

The breath is really a signpost. It stamps us for what we are. Many otherwise companionable and desirable persons are extremely obnoxious because this particular feature in them is so objectionable.

Frequently girls and young women lose valuable opportunities in life, either matrimonial or social—and doubtless commercial—because in this respect they are impossible. Husbands and wives are forced to tolerate each other when such conditions exist, and one cannot refrain from wonder at the lack of intelligence manifested by those so afflicted. Is it possible that they are not conscious of it? Being part of themselves, perhaps not; yet one won-





ders. To be unpleasant to the olfactories is a gross and wanton neglect of the very first principles of human intercourse; it is below the animals. And, by the way, animals in apparent good health—we are not speaking of diseased states—are never known to have an offensive breath. This is due to the fact that they live altogether in accord with their nature, eating only such things as are peculiar to themselves, drinking only water, and breathing in quantities of fresh air. It is a valuable health-and-beauty hint in itself.

Unless an obnoxious breath is caused by diseased condition, there is absolutely no excuse for it, even when, as is sometimes the case, it springs from some *inherent* state. This offers no excuse. An objectionable breath is too distressing to be tolerated, since it effaces every claim one may have to attractiveness.

One may be ever so inviting and charm in infinite ways, but as soon as an offensive breath is apparent, the charmed one is repelled. When this condition arises from no appreciable source, but is, as mentioned above, *inherent*, the entire system should be overhauled and purified. The diet, upon which the fluids and "humors" of the body depend, must be thoroughly re-

vised and reduced to the blandest. There is more truth than fiction in the saying: "Tell me what he eats and I'll tell you what he is." If the diet consists of heavy, indigestible mixtures, highly spiced and seasoned, with beverages of all kinds, the body is naturally completely saturated with these substances, for, of course, it subsists upon them. If, however, the food ingested is light, easily burned up, and gotten rid of, the fires within glow with a pure and steady flame, the blood is a sweet stream of liquid health, and the breath is odorless or as sweet as a baby's.

To clean out the various drains of the body goes hand and hand with a change of diet. A heaping teaspoonful of sodium phosphate in a tumbler of hot water a half hour before breakfast is excellent, and, where it is demanded, the same dose can be repeated before other meals. The nose, throat, and mouth require similar treatment with warm alkaline washes. A nasal douche is necessary for this purpose, and either Siler's or Dobell's solution should be used; it can be made at home by purchasing the tablets above named at any pharmacy. Then, with scrupulous cleanliness of the outer body, all tendency to



A nasal douche of warm alkaline water purifies the upper respiratory tract.

ward an impure breath will gradually disappear.

If, on the other hand, the cause of this trouble depends upon nose, throat, or mouth conditions, these must be remedied; or when indigestion, intestinal torpor, or fermentation exist, stronger measures than sodium phosphate may be necessary. Intestinal antisepsis is called for in many such conditions—and again we think of Metchnikoff and soured milk! Charcoal and creosote tablets are highly valued by some for this purpose. Many physicians like salol because it breaks up in the intestines—not in the stomach—and so these parts secure the full benefit of its action; other physicians never use anything but beta-naphthol as an intestinal antiseptic.

In a great many instances a fetid breath is caused by throat and nose trouble; actual disease of these parts is not included here. It goes without saying that some of these conditions are almost unbearable. Repeated colds that leave the mucous membranes unclean, chronically enlarged glands that form admirable hiding places for solids and liquids taken in by the mouth and nose—food, dust, and so forth—in which bacteria soon cause putrefactive changes—these are among the most frequent causes of tainted breath. In children, enlarged glands should be removed; in the case of adults, it is a mooted question, *but they can be kept clean*.

Antiseptic mouth washes and gargles are not sufficient; *they do not reach the parts*. Nasal douching that washes the impurities out through the mouth, by pouring a stream of warm, mildly antiseptic water into the nostrils, will alone prove effectual. At first this treatment is very unpleasant because it is unusual and stirs up the parts unduly; for this reason one should proceed with gentle care. Harsh measures are never necessary and always do more harm than good. A mild, warmed, antiseptic

water should be allowed to flow gently into and up one nostril and out of the mouth, and then the process should be repeated with the other nostril. After several trials it will become easy and agreeable, and, best of all, *desirable*, when its delightfully sweet, clean effects are appreciated.

There is perhaps no greater human attraction than an exquisitely kept mouth with all that pertains thereto. The tongue is a great indicator of the physical condition of the body. In good health it should be moderately red, clean, and moist; if habitually coated, it points to derangements of the stomach and liver, and usually imparts a "heaviness" to the breath.

Many hygients advise cleansing the tongue every morning with a flexible whalebone; but if care is observed in other directions, as pointed out heretofore, this should not be necessary. However, since a coated tongue calls attention to some disturbance, it should never be overlooked, as it prevents that sweetness of the mouth which alone satisfies the fastidious.

The gums are another factor of great importance in considering this subject. They are also significant of health or disease, more especially of the teeth; but aside from this they reveal far more to the observer than is commonly supposed. They announce alimentary states, as well as disclose the dietetic habits of one's ancestry. In normal condition, the gums should not show in conversation; if they show very plainly and to any extent when the mouth is in repose, it is a display of inherited weakness due mainly to faulty diet. Long-continued deprivation of the proper food for building up the system to its highest state results in such degeneracy.

The ignorance of many otherwise intelligent persons on the subject of food is quite amazing. A great many foolish women avoid good, plain fare—muscle and bone-making fare—because they

think that it is plebeian and that thin, delicate, bloodless bodies are "aristocratic." The dietetic sins of these parents are revealed in their children.

No beautifully developed mouth shows the gums. When they are slightly displayed in conversation, a lack of physical and mental vigor is indicated. Their color also is very significant, dark red being unhealthy, especially if they bleed readily. When very pale, they point to anæmia and a general impoverishment of the system. To be beautiful, they must be a healthy pink and so hard that the use of a tooth pick will not injure them.

The jaws are the bony framework of the mouth, and are so interesting a feature of the human face that we could take up a good deal of time with them, but space forbids.

The most attractive jaw is the symmetrically curved one, and when terminating in an oval chin, such a formation is significant of normal strength and a taste for art and beauty. The square jaw is indicative of manliness, and when associated with other normal features, is a mark of strength and character. There are many variations from these types. When the jaw protrudes markedly, the beautiful lines of the face are destroyed—that is, of the highly developed Caucasian face; of course, in other races we look for this evidence of racial type, but when observed in a pure Caucasian, it indicates a backward step.

Some jaws are very decidedly protrusive. Nature seeks to compensate for this defect somehow, and usually accompanies it with an easy, kindly disposition, so that those so formed are attractive and even lovely in temperament. This defect may be dental only, in which case the teeth alone protrude. The development of the lower jaw should be carefully watched from infancy. That of a white baby should recede very markedly from the closure



The use of dental floss is imperative.

of the mouth at birth. When adult years are reached, the line of the mouth should be perpendicular. In some firm characters there is a slight forward projection.

Now, while the subject is still young, that is to say, *in childhood*, any marked deviation from the normal can readily be corrected, and this should invariably be done, for this feature distinguishes the more advanced type of human development. Oral specialists are now devoting a good deal of attention to the correction of protruding jaws, and without surgery, with the aid of simple appliances, they effect almost miraculous changes in the contour of the face. When the difficulty lies with the teeth alone, correction is much easier and should under no circumstances be neglected, as one's whole progress in life may hinge upon it.

The teeth, situated as they are in so prominent a position, possess great beauty value, and guarding as they do the entrance to the digestive tract, are

the harbingers of health, as it were. A perfectly formed set of teeth depends upon this normal size of the jawbones, and here, too, parents should watch carefully for the appearance of crowding, which later on becomes overlapping, and which not only ruins the formation of the lower part of the face, but lays the foundation for a good deal of dental and digestive trouble.

Superfluous teeth should be removed early in life, so that those which are retained can spread out and develop properly, thus adding greatly to their beauty and usefulness. Teeth that are crowded decay more quickly than those separated slightly, as decay is almost always caused by the lodgment in the crevices of food which is acted upon by bacteria. Food in itself does not give rise to caries of the teeth; it is the putrefactive changes caused by microbes in the mouth. Arrest of dental caries follows the plugging of such cavities either with metals, porcelain, or antiseptic substances that prevent and destroy the action of germs. When these measures are not taken, the process of decay goes on until complete destruction of the tooth follows. Fetur of the breath is frequently caused by decaying matter in the mouth, such as food, germs, and broken-down teeth. These also act upon the gums and put them in an unhealthy and offensive state. Accumulations of tartar at the base of the teeth also favor troubles of the gums.

Children should early be taught the extreme necessity of caring for the mouth and teeth; much patience and perseverance is necessary before they can be safely intrusted to perform the toilet of the mouth systematically, as they cannot be expected to appreciate its value. After a while such care becomes second nature and almost a religious duty.

The daily care of the teeth is, of course, imperative. Nature intended

them to hold out in good condition for a lifetime, but nature does not take civilization into account. The daily care of the teeth involves more than these few words imply. The brush selected must suit individual needs; any toothbrush will not answer, especially upon the delicate, sensitive structures of children and some adults. Those of soft, uneven bristles are generally recommended; this is a matter of choice. Brushes must not be used too long. Dentists say that after one month they can no longer be kept sweet and clean; therefore, a great many purchase their favorite toothbrush by the dozen.

The selection of pastes, powders, and washes also depends upon individual needs. Since so much has been said upon uric acid, the market is flooded with dental preparations purporting to safeguard the teeth and gums against the effect of acids. As good a remedy as any is bicarbonate of soda. Some dentists strongly advocate bathing the teeth just before retiring with milk of magnesia and allowing some of it to remain on the teeth during sleep. Chlorate of potash has latterly been highly extolled by some authorities as a sure preventive to dental trouble, as well as a good preservative; it has many strong advocates, and tooth pastes having chlorate of potash as the chief ingredient are procurable at any pharmacy.

Particles of food should always be removed after eating. The toothpick is condemned as injurious to both gums and teeth, and dental floss advocated instead. It is an unpardonable social sin to use either in the presence of others, yet the need is sometimes imperative.

The teeth should be inspected regularly every six months by a dentist; in the meantime, it is a capital plan to go over them with a little dental mirror every few days; with very simple remedies they can be kept in beautiful condition.

THE BREATH, MOUTH, AND TEETH

Removing tartar prevents decay and recession of the gums. Rubbing the gums with lemon juice or with salt hardens and sweetens them. Applications of tincture of iodine have a similar effect, especially when the gums

are inclined to be soft. Peroxide of hydrogen bleaches the teeth.

When these precautions are followed, and the teeth occasionally polished with soft bands of linen and nail paste, their health and beauty are doubly enhanced.

Answers to Correspondents

MARIE.—If you are actually emaciated, there must be some constitutional trouble. You probably do not assimilate your food. Read the article published in this magazine some time ago, entitled, "How to Gain Weight and Strength." Write to me for a blood tonic that will stimulate your digestive tract and start you on the upward road. Meanwhile, eat plenty of good, wholesome food, and live out of doors.

UMBAL.—There is a difference between stoutness and fatness. The tendency toward fat is a disease. Have you tried fasting two days out of each week? If the heart is strong, you could stand hot baths, followed by sweating.

ANNETTE.—Most face powders contain oxide of zinc or bismuth, and so are harmful. Use only the finest of rice flour, which you can scent delicately with your favorite perfume.

MEREDITH.—You may be using too much soap. Avoid it for a while and use cleansing creams.

S. E.—Try this for falling hair:

Corrosive sublimate.....	10 grains
Chloride of ammonia.....	2 drams
Water of eucalyptus.....	6 ounces

Mix and rub into the scalp at night on retiring by means of a small sponge or piece of cotton. Label "*Poison*."

HONOR.—The skin sometimes itches because it is dry, in which case rubbing with olive oil relieves the condition. For persistent itch you will find this remedial:

Beechwood creosote.....	10 drops
Glycerin	3 ounces
Rose water	3 ounces

Mix and mop frequently over the skin.

Doctor Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those inclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.

MRS. T.—The skin is a vast excretory organ, and so I cannot advise anything that will prevent its activity. Bathe daily and use a perfumed body powder; this will surely overcome the odor.

OLD MAID.—Directions for the treatment of wrinkles, and formulas for a hair tonic and a fattening food, will gladly be furnished to you on proper application. You are too introspective. Find some interest outside of yourself. Go in for a hobby; it doesn't matter what, so that it is a congenial occupation.

EVELYN.—I unqualifiedly condemn the use of hair dyes. The preparation so often mentioned in these pages of sage, tar, and iron will restore gray hair to its original color if it is properly made and used. This does not include auburn shades; the best treatment for these is henna.

R. N.—Send a self-addressed envelope for treatment of superfluous hair.

MAUDE.—Whitening liquid powder:

Pure oxide of zinc.....	½ ounce
Glycerin	1 dram
Rose water	4 ounces
Essence of roses.....	16 drops

Mix the glycerin and oxide of zinc into a smooth paste, and stir in the rose water, to which the essence has previously been added.

AUNT JANE.—Animals select the food best suited to their needs. We have lost this instinct. The best I can suggest is that you avoid what you know disagrees with you, and chew thoroughly every morsel before swallowing it. A list of foods containing youth-sustaining elements will be mailed you, if desired.



AN OPEN LETTER TO AMERICAN BUSINESS MEN

This is not a time for alarm, but for calm, deliberate judgment and foresight. The whole world has been thrown out of gear, in commerce, industry and finance, by the great war. Manifestly, it is a time of broad and radical readjustments. There are four underlying conditions that give courage.

First:—The new Currency Law, which is just on the point of becoming operative. The Federal Reserve Board has been created, the Federal Reserve Centres located, and this whole scheme of sound and elastic currency is ready to stimulate trade, commerce and manufacturing.

Second:—Our great crops. These amount to hundreds of millions of dollars, beyond the needs of our own consumption, and the government is already working out plans by which the

crops can be sent to the warring nations that need them.

Third:—The currency and the crops join in enriching our enormous home market, and it is now spread ready for the harvest before our American manufacturers, with little or no competition. It is an unprecedented commercial situation.

Fourth:—The Panama Canal is now open for traffic, making both coasts of South America more accessible for our American manufacturers.

These four conditions combine to make an opportunity that has not been equaled in the lifetime of any man now living. To lose heart is to lose ground. It is not only self-interest, through building up individual fortune and strength, but patriotic interest, in building up the commercial supremacy of America, that unite in urging all manufacturers and business men to move forward.

Business Executives, with marketing problems, are offered the combined knowledge of forty-five national periodicals. Co-operation will very gladly be given in an effort to help our American industries along the lines of market analyses, national sales facts, etc., etc. Address:

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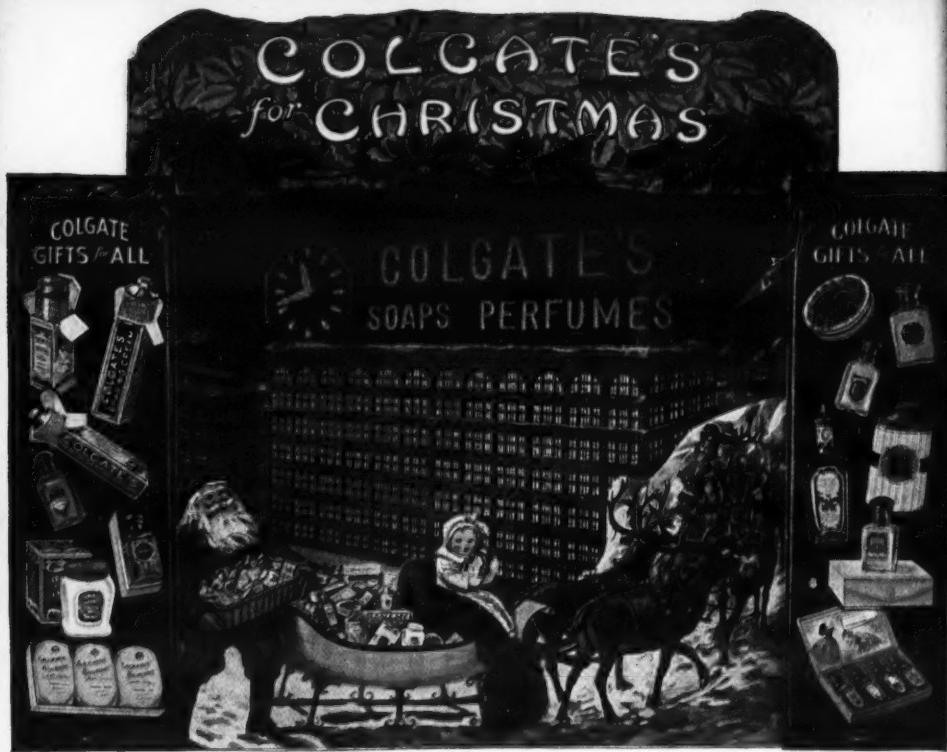
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You will find the Colgate Assortment at your dealer's full of suggestions while the pleasure of your friends in the use of these dainty yet inexpensive luxuries will be a long reminder of your thoughtfulness.

Be a Colgate "SPUG." To be a member of the "Society for the Prevention of Useless Giving" is good. To belong to the "Society for the Promotion of Useful Giving" is better.

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